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In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

March 22, 1998

Crossing Borders

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In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

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Editorial

Remember the Maine!

One hundred years ago last month, the U.S. battleship *Maine* blew up in Havana's harbor. Rival New York newspapers—published by William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer—seized upon the explosion to stir up war fever against Spain, which was then trying to squelch a movement for Cuban independence. Hearst's screaming headlines railed against the atrocities that Spain was allegedly committing against Cuban revolutionaries. When a correspondent in Havana wired that war seemed unlikely, Hearst replied: "You furnish the pictures, and I'll furnish the war."

Some historians have credited the New York rivals' sensational journalism with leading the country to war, but newspapers throughout the nation's heartland also helped prepare Americans for the absorption of the remnants of Spain's crumbling empire. As a result, the United States seized the Philippines and Puerto Rico, and imposed on Cuba a semi-colonial status that lasted until the revolution of 1959.

Now, a century later, the media are paving the way for yet another imperial foray, this time in Iraq. Following the Clinton administration line, the media spew forth two basic arguments: one patently untrue, the other profoundly hypocritical.

First, the administration portrays Iraq as a serious threat to its neighbors. Indeed, Clinton now calls Saddam Hussein the leading "21st century predator."

But who exactly does Iraq threaten?

Not Israel, whose leaders keep repeating the obvious: that Iraq has neither compelling military nor political reasons to attack. Never shy about exaggerating enemy strength, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu nevertheless insists that "the risk of an Iraqi attack on Israel is very low." The mere hint of an Iraqi move against Israel would trigger devastating retaliation, as it did in 1981, when Israeli leaders concluded that Iraq was developing nuclear weapons.

Not Saudi Arabia and most other Arab nations, who oppose an American attack. They do not fear Hussein, but, as *The Econ-*

omist notes, they are "acutely aware of the American double standard that lets Israel defy the U.N. and arm itself with nuclear weapons, but is ready to bomb Iraq for hanging on to drums of anthrax or nerve gas." *Al Ahram*, Egypt's leading newspaper, expressed the Arab view last month: The American position toward Iraq, it said, is "coercive, aggressive, unwise and uncaring about the lives of Iraqis, who are unnecessarily subjected to sanctions and humiliations."

Not Iran. Hussein has been there and done that—for eight years. Iran is not worried. It knows Iraq has no interest in a rerun.

The second basic argument is that "Saddam" (as the media call him) is evil.

Well, yes, but when he served our rulers' interests, that didn't matter. Ronald Reagan, the expert on "evil empires," and George Bush generously supplied him with arms when he was an ally against Iran. Hussein became "evil" only when Iraq threatened U.S. and British oil interests in Kuwait.

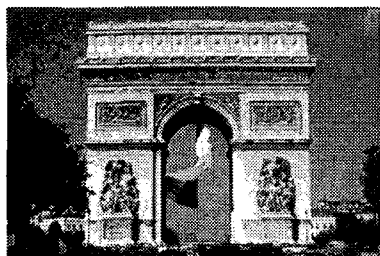
Evil is a handy notion for American policymakers, but it rarely plays more than a propaganda role. And anyway, Saddam Hussein is an amateur in that department. Compare him to other close U.S. allies, past and present: Indonesia's Suharto, Zaire's Mobutu Sese Seko or Chile's Gen. Augusto Pinochet. Washington supported them all for decades while they plundered their nations and ruthlessly slaughtered their political opponents. Suharto alone has killed more than 500,000 Indonesians at home and in East Timor.

Fed a steady barrage of thinly varnished half-truths and lies about Hussein's military capacities and political intentions, many Americans naturally support military intervention. The healthy surprise is that opposition is growing. As the administration's February 18 public relations fiasco at Ohio State University demonstrated, the official line doesn't wash. Nor is Ohio State an anomaly. U.S. Roman Catholic cardinals have formally urged Clinton not to bomb Iraq, and a small anti-war student movement shows signs of life. It's just a beginning, but it offers hope for the return of sanity. —J.W.

***A century later,
the media are paving
the way for another
imperial foray.***



Cover design by Estelle Carol.



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Letters

Know Thy Friends

Joel Bleifuss' article, "Know Thine Enemy" (February 8), incorrectly implied that the 1978 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *First National Bank of Boston v. Bellotti* is the controlling legal precedent with regard to political expenditures by corporations.

There are, in fact, two other more recent Supreme Court rulings that are more applicable than *Bellotti*, or the 1976 decision in *Buckley v. Valeo*, which is also frequently named as a critical precedent. I refer to *Federal Election Commission v. Massachusetts Citizens for Life* (1986) and *Austin v. Michigan Chamber of Commerce* (1990).

In the *Austin* case, for example, the Court reviewed a Michigan law that prohibited corporations from spending treasury money on state candidates' elections. The Michigan Chamber of Commerce, which gets three-quarters of its annual dues from corporations, sued the state of Michigan to enjoin enforcement of the law. But the Supreme Court upheld the law, ruling specifically that the Chamber of Commerce did not have First Amendment rights. It stated that Michigan's "decision to regulate only corporations is precisely tailored to serve the compelling state interest of eliminating from the political process the corrosive effect of political 'war chests' amassed with the aid of the legal advantages given to corporations."

Bleifuss does a disservice to the public by referring to *Bellotti* and *Valeo* as the definitive cases on this issue. People should know that they can insist that our laws be enforced and that they can expect performance and vigilance by our attorney generals and by our elections boards.

**Ann E. Fleischli
Madison, Wis.**

Game Theories

I was happy to read your editorial on the essential imperialism behind the current U.S. confrontation with Iraq ("Saddam's Dangerous Game," December 14, 1997). To your credit, you dismiss the common justification, echoed even among many liberals, that Saddam Hussein needs to be restrained because he is a dangerous dictator frothing at the mouth to poison, infect and nuke the entire world.

More realistically, this tyrant, like several others today, doesn't have the power to endanger the security of the world, beyond the feudatories of the Persian Gulf. Saddam is more likely to endanger the reach of the American empire and its perennial attempts to control the world's flow of oil.

However, your assessment of the motivation for American intervention in Iraq falls short. This crisis has two horns, not one. Washington's concern



is not only about oil, but also about the status of its satellite, Israel. Israel's hegemony in the Middle East would be shaken if Arab countries were allowed to coalesce around a dominant regional power like Iraq.

**Louvan Nolting
Lewes, Del.**

Freedom to Fly

Kevin Kelly's article about air travel ("Flying the Unfriendly Skies," February 22) made some good points but overlooked two.

First, despite its flaws, air travel pricing is a rare case in which the wealthy pay close to their fair share. Accommodating passengers who change travel plans at the last minute costs an airline a lot of money. It is only fair that those passengers pay more.

Kelly should also have mentioned that frequent flier awards are not taxed. Whenever the cost of a ticket is a tax-deductible business expense, the corresponding mileage award should be taxed.

**Luiz S. Homem de Mello
New York**

Nicole Hollander

Sylvia

*the Woman
who's not a
trained Social
Worker
Speaks up.*



"Betty," I SAID, "I'M NOT A TRAINED SOCIAL WORKER, BUT IF YOUR HUSBAND'S ACTING AS GRUMPY AS A BEAR, MAYBE HE NEEDS A LITTLE MORE SATURATED FAT IN HIS DIET... STOP MAKING SUCH A BIG DEAL ABOUT THOSE CHEESEBURGERS. ALSO I THINK A LITTLE HENNA RINSE WOULD GIVE YOUR HAIR AND YOUR MARRIAGE A LIFT." I GUESS BETTY TOOK MY ADVICE BECAUSE TODAY SHE CORNERED ME IN THE PRODUCE SECTION... HER HUSBAND RAN OFF WITH A MOUSEY-HAIRED NUTRITIONIST HE MET AT THE HOSPITAL. WELL, I'M NOT A TRAINED SOCIAL WORKER, AM I?

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Nicole Hollander 11-5

Bibi's Baptist Bedfellows

BY CHARMAINE SEITZ

On his last visit to the United States, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with the Rev. Jerry Falwell, further aggravating President Clinton, alienating left-leaning Zionists and warming up a lucrative, if strange, relationship with Christian fundamentalists.

At that January meeting, Falwell and leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention pledged to mobilize 200,000 evangelical pastors in support of Netanyahu's hardline stance on the Palestinian-Israeli peace process. Netanyahu welcomes the support at a time when he is isolated internationally as well as at home for stalling on implementation of signed accords. This is an awkward alliance. After all, the Southern Baptists announced a special commitment to evangelizing Jews at their 1996 convention, a mission very much at odds with the identity of the Jewish state.

"Netanyahu might think he is doing the Jewish community some kind of service" by meeting with Falwell and the Southern Baptists, says Rabbi David Rosen, director of the Anti-Defamation League in Israel. But because the prime minister did not express any reservations about the group's fundamentalist beliefs nor meet with representatives of mainstream American Judaism, Rosen says, there is reason to question his priorities.

This is not the first time that Netanyahu has courted Christian fundamentalists. Last year, the prime minister appeared on Benny Hinn's "This Is Your Day," pledging to keep Israel open for Christian pilgrims and evangelists. Hinn, whose trademark is public healings, promised to escort 30,000 Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land this year

to celebrate Israel's 50th birthday. But when the television cameras cut back to Hinn alone, he told the audience: "Our prayer is that the Jewish people will be saved."

Falwell, Hinn and others see Israel as the modern political incarnation of Biblical prophecy. As Christian Zionists, they support Israel because they believe that a Jewish state is a precursor for the

blessed," says Rabbi Michael Melchior, director of Meimad, an Orthodox political movement interested in reconciliation between secular and religious Israelis as well as Israelis and Palestinians. Melchior has serious reservations, however, about Christian groups that missionize in Israel or become involved in Israeli politics.

The evangelical presence in Israel

raises the ire of many secular Israelis as well. When one evangelist sent a mass mailing of Christian tracts throughout the country, public outrage led to a proposal to prohibit any written "inducement to religious conversion." That bill languishes in the Knesset, its language under attack from Netanyahu, free-speech advocates and those who say it would alienate Israel's strongest supporters.

Christian Zionists also hinder a peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Sanders of Christians For Israel says the Palestinian representatives "are treacherous, they cannot be trusted, they are no friend of the Jewish state." His words echo the views of the conservative side of Netanyahu's shaky government coalition. While Sanders in Israel and Falwell in the United States do not work together, they are both part of a Christian Zionist support network that Netanyahu can use to influence American policy. As liberal supporters of Israel rail against the prime minister's dismantling of the peace process, Netanyahu will need the Christian right to help handle his public relations in the United States. ■

Charmaine Seitz is a freelance writer based near Jerusalem.



Benjamin Netanyahu meets with the Rev. Jerry Falwell as Eliahu Ben Elissar, the Israeli ambassador to the United States, looks on.

second coming of Christ. On February 3, for example, Texas evangelist John Hagee gave the United Jewish Appeal \$1 million raised by his congregation to resettle Jewish immigrants in Israel. Christians For Israel, a ministry with 23 offices worldwide that spends nearly \$1 million annually in Israel, offers gifts and prayers to Israeli soldiers and funds an Israeli anti-abortion group. "Our stand with Israel is based upon our Biblical convictions and the word of God," explains Ray Sanders, international director of Christians For Israel. The group says that the charity work it does in Israel is not contingent upon Jewish conversion to Christianity. But it does not hide its belief that the return of the Messiah will bring about either conversion or damnation for the Jewish people.

"Some work that Christians do is very

interview

A Journey of Hope

On a family camping trip to Montana in 1973, Marietta Jaeger's 7-year-old daughter was kidnapped and brutally murdered. A year later, the killer called Jaeger in the middle of the night to taunt her. But he was unnerved and began to weep when she asked him, "What can I do to help you?"

He talked to her for an hour, dropping enough clues for the FBI to find and arrest him. A devout Catholic, Jaeger asked prosecutors not to seek the death penalty. But after confessing to several murders, he hanged himself in jail.

In the mid-'80s, Jaeger helped found Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation. She now travels across the country on "Journeys of Hope," counseling victims' families and campaigning against capital punishment. In 1997, she was named "Abolitionist of the Year" by the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty. She spoke with *In These Times* from her home in Detroit.

In These Times: Many people say it is easy to be against the death penalty until someone close to you is murdered. Why are you against it?

Marietta Jaeger: It is precisely because my daughter was a murder victim in a state that has the death penalty that I've had a chance to think through all of the factors involved. I came to the conclusion that to kill somebody in my little girl's name would be to profane the beauty of her life. She's worthy of a more noble, beautiful and honorable memorial than cold-blooded, state-sanctioned, barbaric killing.

ITT: How did you find forgiveness?

MJ: In the beginning, I would have been happy to kill this man with my bare hands, and could have done it with a smile on my face. That's a normal, valid, human response. But I recognized that kind of hatred would undo me. It was not easy. People who think forgiveness is for wimps haven't tried it.

In more than 20 years of working with murder victims' families, I have seen that those who maintain a vindictive mindset end up giving the offender another victim. I saw that happen in my own family. I saw my husband die an early death because he just wasn't willing to let go.

ITT: But you were able to move from your own devastating experience to organizing others against the death penalty with Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation.

MJ: Although none of us would ever want these credentials, we have found that we are one of the most powerful and persuasive voices against the death penalty. Nobody can come to me and say, "you wouldn't be opposed to the death penalty if it happened to your little girl," because it did happen.

ITT: Yet, some of the strongest proponents of capital punishment come from the victims rights movement.

MJ: I certainly think that victims should have rights. I was very fortunate because I was involved in the investigation of my daughter's disappearance. The victim's family should not be shut out.

But they are often victimized again by the prosecutors, who take them at a time when they are inconsolable in their grief and desperate for some relief. The death penalty is held out as a means to feel better and see justice done. But they pay the dearest price. They sit through trial after trial, appeal after appeal. As they listen to all the gruesome details, their wounds are ripped open over and over again. In the end, it doesn't bring them the retribution and the healing and the hope that they had been promised.

ITT: What was your reaction to the recent publicity surrounding Karla Faye Tucker's execution in Texas?

MJ: She was a real sweetheart, and she won a lot of people's hearts. She was attractive, vivacious and born-again. But the truth is that there are many,



Marietta Jaeger

many people who have been executed who are not the same people that they were when they were first arrested. Sometimes they have had as long as 20 years to sit in a crummy little cell on death row and contemplate what happened.

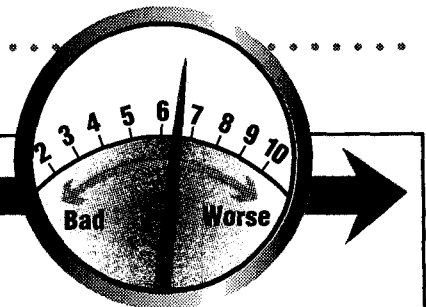
ITT: Everyone from Jerry Falwell to Pat Robertson, who are clearly in favor of the death penalty, campaigned for Tucker's clemency.

MJ: I really was hoping that some good might come from her death, that her death might be a catalyst for the Christian right to rethink its position on the death penalty. I have spoken often in the "Bible Belt" against the death penalty. I speak in a lot of the churches from a Christian perspective. When it's presented in that way, many people do change their minds. I haven't given up hope that this segment of Christianity will rethink the value of killing people. They say "an eye for an eye," which is from the Hebrew scriptures. But in the Christian scriptures, which they claim to read, Jesus says love your enemy, forgive your enemy, pray for your enemy. ■

appall-o-meter

BY DAVID FUTRELLE

The In These Times Index of Indecencies



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Immaculate Misconceptions

Be careful opening your e-mail: You could get pregnant. At least that's the worry of Rep. James Traficant (D-Ohio), who recently told fellow lawmakers about the case of "Frances," a woman who claims she got knocked up via the Net. "That's right—pregnant," Traficant announced on the floor of the House. "It's time for Congress to act. The computers do not need a V-chip. The Internet needs a chastity chip."

According to Reuters, "Traficant did not say whether he believed the woman's account [though] he did say it was 'enough to crash your hard drive.'"

Shills in Space

Cash-strapped cosmonauts on the rickety Russian space station Mir have found financial salvation on QVC. Two cosmonauts recently appeared on the cable shopping channel live from outer space, selling Mars rocks and used spacesuits. For the QVC bosses, the move to Mir was a natural step. "We built a 20,000-square-foot house in our studio to demonstrate home products," the channel's executive producer told The Associated Press. "If you want to demonstrate a space pen, where else would you go but space?"

The Russian space program, which has already allowed Mir to be used in Israeli milk advertisements, is eager to exploit the space station's commercial potential. "It doesn't make any differ-

ence for us what to advertise—cars or foodstuffs," Yuri Koptev, head of the program, told the Itar-Tass news agency. How about Tang?

Other Miracles

A Norwegian Cruise Line ship carrying 900 gay and lesbian vacationers recently canceled a visit to the company's private Bahamian island, Stirrup Cay. The Cruise Line blamed bad weather; Bahamian clergymen said it was an act of God. "Prayer changes things," said Bishop Harcourt Pinder, president of the Bahamas Christian Council, exalting his "victory" over the gay cruise. ■

Stunned by a stupid statement?

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labor

Magna Cum Union

BY CRAIG AARON

In a landslide victory, part-time faculty members at Chicago's Columbia College voted overwhelmingly to unionize, making the school one of the few organized four-year, private colleges in the country.

The results of the mail-in ballots were announced by the National Labor Relations Board on February 4. In the final tally, part-time faculty voted 299 to 80 to be represented in contract negotiations by the Part-time Faculty Association at Columbia (P-fac), which is affiliated with the Illinois Education Association (IEA), an affiliate of the National Education Association (NEA).

At Columbia, a school of nearly 8,500 students located in downtown Chicago, around 70 percent of courses

are taught by part-time faculty. According to P-fac, part-timers earn about \$1,500 per course, while full-time professors receive approximately \$5,700 in salary and benefits for the same work. "As a part-timer, the job is low status and the pay is dreadful," says Chris Thale, a P-fac organizer who teaches part-time in the liberal education department.

In 1993, a small group of part-timers formed P-fac to petition Columbia's administration for a more equitable arrangement. They wanted the administration to raise the base salary for part-timers to \$3,000 per course and to provide health benefits, more job security and a larger voice in determining policy and curriculum. But P-fac was largely ignored until it joined forces

with the IEA/NEA in the summer of 1997.

In response, the administration hired Dow Lohnes & Albertson, a union-busting law firm from Washington, D.C., which coordinated a typical anti-union propaganda campaign. Part-timers were inundated with form letters from the administration, charging that a union would bring "outsiders" into the college and lead to higher tuition and fewer classes.

Now, P-fac is conducting a membership drive, writing a constitution and preparing for contract negotiations, which should start by April. Columbia Provost Bert Gall has pledged in a written statement to "bargain in good faith with the union." ■

Slip Slidin' Away

BY JEFFREY ST. CLAIR

A virulent storm dropped more than 20 inches of rain in less than a week on the Pacific Northwest in the fall of 1996, triggering thousands of landslides across the coastal mountains and the Cascade range. The landslides destroyed hundreds of roads and killed more than a dozen people. In Hubbard Creek, Ore., a debris torrent packed with boulders the size of Ford Explorers buried a house owned by the Moon family under 15 feet of mud, rocks and stumps. Four people were killed, and two others barely survived.

The landslide that killed the Moons originated on a steep mountain slope that had been clearcut by Champion International Corp. Relatives of the Moon family have filed an \$11.6 million lawsuit against the timber company, arguing that its indiscriminate logging practices prompted the tragedy. They are also considering a suit against the state of Oregon, which granted a logging permit to Champion despite concerns raised by foresters at the Oregon Department of Forestry that the site, if clearcut, posed "an extreme potential for a hazardous landslide." No one ever warned the Moons of the dangers presented by the clearcut above their house (see "Clearcut disaster," February 2, 1997).

"I think it's only fair to have some kind of laws that disclose the dangers of living in a mudslide area," says Karen Henderson, a neighbor of the Moons. "This is not about salmon or spotted owls, it's about people. We pay taxes to run these agencies, and I want them to tell people about the risks they might face from clearcuts."

The timber industry has dismissed allegations that the rash of landslides were caused by logging practices. A spokesman for Weyerhaeuser, which owns 6 million acres of forest in the United States, says "it's preposterous to say that clearcutting causes flooding. And there's no definitive proof that clearcutting contributes to landslides.

Flooding is caused by too much water for the earth to absorb."

Officials with the U.S. Forest Service and the Oregon Department of Forestry hid behind similar defenses, arguing that the landslides were "natural phenomena exacerbated by unnatural precipitation." But now an internal study by the Oregon Department of Forestry confirms what environmentalists have known for years: Clearcuts cause landslides.

The research team documented more than 600 landslides inside 52 square miles of the central Oregon coastal range, most of which began in clearcuts or along logging roads. The study found that landslides were four times more likely to occur in clearcuts younger than 10 years old than in mature forests. The researchers also found that landslides originating in clearcut sites generate twice as much erosion as landslides that start in forests.

An internal U.S. Forest Service memo obtained by *In These Times* indicates that the Oregon study may actually underestimate the link between landslides and logging. The memo refers to a draft review of landslides at six national forests in the Northwest. Based on aerial photographs and satellite imaging, Forest Service investigators estimated that more than 80 percent of large landslides begin in clearcuts or their nearby logging roads. The memo also says clearcuts are the primary cause of "mass wasting" slides, where entire mountainsides collapse into streams.

The findings are another blow to the timber industry, which is already working feverishly to avoid a federal crack-down on logging practices to protect

stocks of coastal salmon and steelhead trout. The population of these fish has declined by more than 80 percent over the past several decades. Environmentalists pin much of the blame on clearcut-caused erosion and landslides that have buried the spawning grounds in coastal streams under silt and mud.

A federal biologist with the National Marine Fisheries Service, who asked to remain anonymous, says that he has recommended a ban on all logging within 100 feet of streams across thousands of miles in Oregon and California. The plan is now sitting at the Commerce Department, which oversees the Fisheries Service. Commerce Secretary Bill Daley is under intense pressure from Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber, a Democrat, and California Gov. Pete Wilson, a Republican, to squash the plan, which they say will cripple the timber industry. In Oregon alone, the proposal would affect more than 65,000 miles of rivers and creeks. If the plan sneaks through the Clinton White House, it could put more than half-a-million acres of forest land off-limits to logging, much of it on corporate lands owned by the likes of Weyerhaeuser. ■



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Media Critic

Capitol Style

BY KEN SILVERSTEIN

If you asked most people to name the country's most important newspapers, it's a safe bet that the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times* would receive most of the votes. If you asked the nation's political elite the same question, those newspapers would be joined by two others: *Roll Call* and *The Hill*.

Little known outside of Washington, D.C., *Roll Call* (published twice weekly) and *The Hill* (published once a week) carry vast weight inside the Beltway. Both newspapers have small circulations: *Roll Call*'s is about 17,500, of which just 5,300 are paid subscribers, while *The Hill*'s is about 21,000, of which fewer than 1,000 subscribe. But both are read religiously by an elite audience of Congress members, their staffers, lobbyists and journalists. A 1996 survey by Erdos & Morgan found that *Roll Call* is read regularly by 67.8 percent of "Congressional Opinion Leaders," second only to the *Washington Post*. *The Hill* came in fifth, at 33.6 percent.

Roll Call and *The Hill* focus almost exclusively on Congress: They cover the White House and other Washington institutions only in so far as they relate to Capitol Hill. In fact, they cover the Hill in such an exhaustive fashion that some readers call them Congress' "campus newspapers." Lengthy investigative articles about a recent campaign finance scandal sit side-by-side with personality profiles of congressional staffers and the results of a Democrat vs. Republican basketball game in the House gym. That helps explain why the publications have such a concentrated audience: It's hard to imagine many general readers wanting to plow through "Sgt.-at-Arms implements new strategy" or "Vacant census post stirs controversy," two of the more exciting articles from a recent edition of *The Hill*.

Members and staffers not only read the papers, but often use them to float policy trial balloons around the Capitol. Last year, *Roll Call* ran a lengthy article about how Sen. Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) was in favor of a pay raise for members of Congress. "The only point to the article was to put up the idea of a pay raise on the bulletin board and see what reaction it got," says a Washington reporter who tracks the Beltway media. Meanwhile, trade groups and businesses use their ad pages to lobby members and congressional committees. Last year, for example, Northrop Grumman carpet-bombed *The Hill* with a series of ads touting the supposed virtues of the B-2 bomber—the \$2 billion per plane program that is regularly targeted by budget hawks in Congress.

Despite their small size, both newspapers have a number of strong investigative reporters who regularly break big stories. *Roll Call* first reported the sleazy fundraising practices of House Speaker Newt Gingrich and the intimate relationship between Rep. Bud Shuster (R-Pa.) and lobbyist Ann Eppard. Both stories garnered national media attention and led to investigations by the House ethics committee. *The Hill* can take credit for breaking last year's story

about the internal Republican coup attempt against Gingrich.

Indeed, because *Roll Call* and *The Hill* have relatively small readerships, journalists from bigger newspapers routinely plunder their pages—often giving the Capitol Hill newspapers little or no credit when "breaking" their stories nationally. In January, the *New York Times* ran a huge story about how dozens of members of Congress and their staffers took junkets to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, a U.S. territory whose government has been trying to fend off federal minimum-wage laws. Buried deep in the article was the acknowledgment that the junkets had first been reported in *Roll Call*. *Roll Call* and *The Hill* deserve credit for digging for stories that most of the press ignores. Of course, most big-name Beltway reporters don't have time to do much digging, given all the energy they expend angling for an appearance on *Meet the Press* and attending cocktail parties with the powerbrokers they cover. ■

Ken Silverstein is co-editor of *Counterpunch* and author of *Washington on \$10 Million a Day*, to be published in March by Common Courage Press.

online

- The Stonewall Riots of 1969 are seen by many as the inauguration of the modern gay rights movement. The Columbia University Library's excellent 1994 exhibit commemorating the 25th anniversary of Stonewall can still be viewed online at www.columbia.edu/cu/libraries/events/sw25. Entitled "Stonewall and Beyond," the exhibit explores the evolution of gay and lesbian writing, imagery and diversity before and after the riots.
- Editorials and columns from hundreds of newspapers across the United States and Canada are collected daily at www.opinion-pages.org. From the *Los Angeles Times* to the *Clarksburg (W.Va.) Exponent*, an index searchable by keyword allows you to gather a variety of views on the day's news.
- For just \$14.95 you can purchase a set of 40 Clinton-Lewinsky affair trading cards at www.clintoncards.com. The rare Michael Isikoff rookie card will surely be worth a fortune someday.

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Quite A Bargain

BY DEIDRE MCFADYEN

With a neoliberal, pro-statehood government in power and a labor movement hobbled by privatization and in-fighting, it hardly seemed a propitious moment for Puerto Rico to pass major labor legislation. But thanks to the governor's political ambitions within the Democratic Party and a million-dollar lobbying and public media campaign coordinated by the AFL-CIO, the island's legislature narrowly passed a collective-bargaining bill for public-sector workers in February.

The bill grants limited collective-bargaining rights to Puerto Rico's more than 150,000 government workers, although it prohibits strikes and bans union contributions to political parties. The bill also makes the payment of union dues voluntary and caps the annual salary increases permitted in contract negotiations. Still, labor leaders close to the AFL-CIO heralded the bill as an important first step in the fight for workers' rights.

Gov. Pedro Rosselló has been one of the bill's most loyal supporters. Some of his political opponents charge that the governor struck a secret deal with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Workers, in which he agreed to back the bill if the union supported his bid for a plebiscite on Puerto Rican statehood. Others say that the governor simply wanted to firm up his support in the Democratic Party and position himself for a cabinet post if Al Gore is elected president in 2000.

Legislators from Rosselló's New Progressive Party, who have strong ties to business interests, only reluctantly toed their leader's line. In the end, the bill sneaked by thanks to the support of two legislators from the pro-commonwealth Popular Democratic Party who defied their party's order to vote against it.

The fight leading up to the bill's pas-

Sierra's Divide

BY JOEL BLEIFUSS

The most democratic of the national environmental organizations, the Sierra Club allows its more than 500,000 members to decide its policy positions. But this openness has enabled a reactionary faction to place an anti-immigrant initiative on the group's annual mail-in ballot.

The controversy started in 1996, when the Sierra Club's board of directors decided not to take a position on immigration, arguing that immigration restrictions are not an appropriate way to deal with population problems. In response, immigration opponents gathered the 1,100 signatures needed to put the issue before all club members. The anti-immigrant initiative calls for the Sierra Club to adopt "a comprehensive population policy ... that continues to advocate an end to U.S. population growth ... through reduction in net immigration."

The board countered with an alternative initiative, which reaffirms its stance on immigration, calling for the group "to address the root causes of migration by encouraging sustainability, economic security, human rights and environmentally responsible consumption." The ballots must be returned by mid-April.

Sierra Club Executive Director Carl Pope says the ballot options reflect two fundamentally different paradigms. "One is the underlying attitude that we are all passengers together on a spaceship, the spaceship earth," Pope says. "The other perspective is a lifeboat analogy, where the Titanic may be sinking but in the United States we are going to get in a lifeboat and protect ourselves by restricting immigration."

The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), a right-wing group dedicated to cracking down on illegal immigrants and radically cutting back legal immigration, is playing a pivotal role in the campaign. FAIR has encouraged its members to join the Sierra Club to influence the vote. More surprisingly, the anti-immigrant initiative has been endorsed by World Watch Institute President Lester Brown, Earth First! founder Dave Foreman and Harvard biologist E.O. Wilson.

"Rather than thinking about how we can get poor people to stop reproducing," says Brad Erickson of the Political Ecology Group, a San Francisco-based environmental justice organization, "environmentalists need to ask how we can radically change the gross overconsumption of resources by the world's privileged." ■

sage deepened divisions in Puerto Rico's already fractious labor movement. The island's small, militant independent unions, which have close historical ties to the independence movement, condemned the bill because it doesn't grant workers the right to strike. They also feared that the bill would erode their power. Currently in Puerto Rico, unions compete with one another for members at each worksite. Under the bill, many smaller unions will likely be edged out by the stateside unions because they don't have the resources to represent all workers in a large bargaining unit.

Fifty percent of the public supports

collective-bargaining rights for government employees, according to recent polls. However, many workers remain ambivalent. "On the one hand, labor activists and workers see this as an opportunity to get their foot in the door, but the open opposition from some union leaders confuses them," says Hector Figueroa, who helped coordinate the political campaign on behalf of the Service Employees International Union. "In the end, however, all the unions are going to try to organize with this bill. The challenge we now face is to improve the bill and ignite enthusiasm so workers exercise their newly acquired rights." ■

The Sole Superpower Syndrome

BY MICHAEL KLARE

The U.S. rush to judgment in Iraq—one could say the frenzy to bomb—is the product of a deeper psychosis in American foreign policy. Since the end of the Cold War, U.S. leaders have been possessed by what can be described as the “sole superpower syndrome”—a sense of nearly godlike power derived from the absence of any balancing forces in the international system. With no curbs on American adventurism, U.S. leaders are undeterred from engaging in impetuous and ill-conceived actions like the impending attack on Iraq.

Do not misunderstand me: I am not nostalgic for the Cold War. The arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union produced ever more horrific weapons of war, and introduced the prospect of thermonuclear Armageddon. I do not wish to return to that condition. But the bipolarity of the Cold War, coupled with the perfectly understandable caution of U.S. and Soviet allies, discouraged impetuous and provocative behavior on either side. Today, we lack such built-in restraints, so the sole superpower syndrome reigns unchecked.

At first, expressions of this syndrome were limited and sporadic. Clinton was hesitant to go into Bosnia, and procrastinated for three years. Lately, however, the episodes have become more frequent and pronounced: the determination to proceed with NATO expansion, despite its devastating impact on U.S.-Russian relations; the cavalier campaign to drop Boutros Boutros-Ghali as secretary-general of the United Nations; and the glee with which Washington has dictated surrender terms to the fallen Asian “tigers.”

The planned attack on Iraq must be seen against this backdrop. Like other recent developments, it has come about in a world in which no state is bold enough or strong enough to tell the sole superpower that it is behaving in an arrogant, and perhaps reckless, fashion. In each instance, Washington has sallied forth, relying on its own (often misguided) counsel and failing to calculate the consequences.

Let us look at the Iraqi case. Supposedly, the United States is acting to destroy Saddam Hussein’s remaining capacity to produce weapons of mass destruction. That Hussein sought to produce such weapons before Operation Desert Storm is not in doubt. But the war, and U.N. action afterwards, destroyed all of his weapons plants and laboratories, leaving only what could be easily removed and hidden: laboratory samples, sci-

entific instruments, computer gear and so forth. These small remnants cannot be destroyed through an air campaign such as that contemplated by the Department of Defense. On the other hand, they cannot be used to mass-produce weapons of mass destruction (without the construction of major new facilities). So the impending raids will neither destroy a significant target nor protect us from a genuine threat.

This being the case, it is apparent that U.S. leaders are being driven by other, less obvious considerations. In my view, the main objective here is a show of force for its own sake—to remind the world, and potential adversaries like Saddam Hussein, that the United States has the power to destroy any military challenger (or combination of challengers), and will do so when aroused. This would explain the president’s evident determination to proceed with the attacks despite a stunning lack of support by our allies.

This is hubris, pure and simple. And history teaches us that those who are possessed by hubris often fail to see the dangerous and self-destructive consequences of their acts. In this case, we can only speculate as to what those consequences might be—but we can assume that they are likely to be serious. In one scenario, the United States could so destabilize Iraq as to unleash a whirlpool of chaos throughout the Persian Gulf; in another, U.S. action could so inflame Muslim sentiment in the region that it ignites a new wave of anti-American upheavals. An attack is also certain to scuttle any short-term hopes of reviving the Arab-Israeli peace process.

Whether or not the attacks occur and any of these scenarios come to pass, we have to grasp the main point here: The U.S. foreign policy leadership has been infected with an unhealthy tendency to hubris, with unforeseeable and potentially dangerous consequences. If we are to promote peace and stability, therefore, and act in the best interests of the nation, we must create a countervailing force to the sole superpower syndrome. This means building a grass-roots network of foreign policy activists, linked to peace and human rights networks around the world. Only in this fashion can we hope to keep the prevailing psychosis in check. ■

Michael Klare is a professor of peace and world security studies at Hampshire College, in Amherst, Mass., and the author of Rogue States and Nuclear Outlaws: America’s Search for a New Foreign Policy (Hill & Wang).

**The impending
U.S. attack on Iraq
is hubris, pure and
simple, with
potentially
dangerous
consequences.**

BY SALIM MUWAKKIL

Movin' on APART

The middle-class Chicago enclave of Lake Meadows is located just a few blocks away from the Ida B. Wells homes, a dismal public housing project that gained infamy in 1994 when two preteen boys threw a 5-year-old out of a 14th floor window. While both communities are predominantly black, they have little else in common. Crime-fueled antagonisms have proved so divisive that since 1986 Lake Meadows' residents have paid for a private security force. Hired to protect African-Americans from their black neighbors, the guards are especially attuned to markers of class.

Similar class-based antagonisms are apparent in black communities across the country, thanks to a widening gap between "thems that got and them that ain't." While income inequality has been expanding among whites as well, the growth is more acute in the black community than in any other segment of the U.S. population. The richest one-fifth of African-Americans earn a record 50 percent of the total income of the black community, reports William Julius Wilson, an urban sociologist at Harvard University. The black middle class has quadrupled since the '60s, doubling in the '80s alone. Yet fully one-third of all African-Americans are worse off economically today than they were on the day that Martin Luther King Jr. died in 1968.

True, all black Americans remain vulnerable to racial biases on many fronts, from institutional discrimination to so-called "micro-insults" (like being followed around in stores or ticketed for "driving while black"). But those barriers have not blocked the growth of the black middle-class. As upper-income African-Americans have grown in number and become more entrenched, and those at the other end have fallen deeper into poverty, black activists and politicians confront a growing class divide.

Commentators are beginning to take notice. In February, a special broadcast of the PBS show *Frontline* presented an hour-long exploration of the subject entitled "The Two Nations of Black America," in the form of an illustrated essay by Henry Louis Gates Jr., chairman of Harvard's influential Department of Afro-American Studies. Gates wonders aloud, "How have we reached this point where we have both the

largest black middle class and the largest black underclass in our history?"

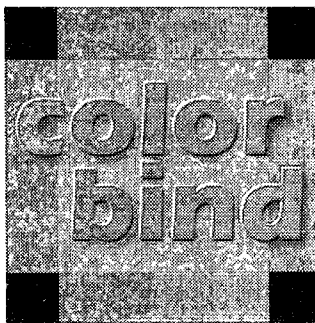
Gates tried to answer the question by tracing his own experiences as a member of that first generation of African-American college graduates who were able to take full advantage of the opportunities wrought by the civil rights movement. The unprecedented success of his cohort boosted America's black middle class to historic levels, but it also, he argues, undermined notions of racial solidarity. The central and pervasive problem of racial discrimination historically encouraged African-Americans to regard themselves, and be regarded, as a monolithic socioeconomic group. But that notion is no longer tenable, Gates insists. "Our generation thought we were going to make a society that had toppled the barriers of race," Wilson said on *Frontline*. "Instead we're living in a society where class makes all the difference in the world."

This discussion is not completely new. In his 1978 book *The Declining Significance of Race*, Wilson argued that well-educated African-Americans had growing economic options.

Wilson suggested that class differences between the black middle class and black underclass were becoming nearly as important as racial differences between white and black Americans. His book was criticized by many civil rights activists, who charged he was giving aid and comfort to white conservatives by de-emphasizing the social costs of racism. That misinterpretation is understandable; historically, racial grievances have fueled the black freedom movement and most contemporary black

organizations are still built on that foundation. For many of these activists, Wilson's thesis seemed close to heresy.

Even though history largely vindicated him, Wilson later backpedaled, admitting in 1996 that he had been insufficiently "sensitive to the cumulative effects of race ... the long-term intergenerational effects of having one's life choices limited by race, regardless of class." Many other theorists argue that race and class are so intimately tied that it is impossible to pull them apart. "The connection between racism and class discrimination in this country has always been deep and intricate—after all, slavery is where it all began," says Barbara Ransby, an assistant professor of history at the University of



Illinois at Chicago.

Still, many analysts keep trying to disentangle the two issues. One reason for this preoccupation is ideological: Left-leaning black activists tend to emphasize the primacy of class, while black nationalists focus on racial oppression. Some nationalists even insist that class differences within the black community only appear when the white power structure tries to "divide and conquer" a people united by race. They deride African-Americans with middle-class aspirations for trying to assimilate into white, mainstream culture.

In recent years, black protest has been dominated by nationalists, and issues of class have been virtually omitted from racial discourse. (In truth, the solidly middle-class civil rights fraternity rarely highlighted class concerns either—the most important exception being King, whose "poor people's campaign" brought an unprecedented focus on the issue shortly before his assassination.) "A kind of bland and uncritical 'blackism' has become prevalent in the African-American community," complains Ron Daniels, director of the Center for Constitutional Rights and the former executive director of the National Rainbow Coalition. Daniels notes that the spurt in the number of black public officials and administrators, considered so important by black power advocates, has done little to change conditions for most black people.

That argument has also been articulated, with much popular success, by Min. Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam. Farrakhan argues that black politicians and administrators are impotent because culturally and economically they are controlled by whites. That can only change, he says, if the black community cultivates its own economic resources and pays the piper to play a black tune. This analysis takes economic deprivation seriously, but like most nationalist appeals, class differences are eventually subsumed into a broader racial narrative.

Gates is critical of nationalists for precisely that reason. In *The Future of the Race*, the 1996 book he co-authored with Cornel West, Gates argues that black nationalism has been used to suppress class consciousness. "As economic differences increase, the need to maintain the appearance of cultural and ideological conformity also increases," he wrote. "But it is these fake masks of conformity that disguise how vast black class differentials really are."

Gates argues that America needs a comprehensive urban "Marshall Plan," a program to educate and train black Ameri-

cans for relevant occupations. Like Wilson, he argues that joblessness is the central cause of our "country's so-called racial crisis." This reformist agenda echoes the National Urban League, which has been demanding such a plan for decades. He also urges the newly prominent African-American studies departments in universities to become more actively involved in building bridges between the campus and the ghetto.

Abdul Akalimat, director of the Africana Studies Department at the University of Toledo, is unconvinced by Gates'

"frothy protests of class inequality." Akalimat agrees that class issues are vital, but he is skeptical of the Gates approach. "There are two notions of class relevant to this issue; class as a narrative—as upward or downward mobility—and class as a structure of power and control," Akalimat says. "Gates' idea of class is a mobility narrative. Like *The Jeffersons* theme song, 'Well, we're moving on up.'"

From Akalimat's perspective, Gates' centrist critique of nationalism misses the structural causes of race and class oppression. He identifies Gates with those capitalists who understand that softening capitalism's rougher edges serves to strengthen its basic structure.

Akalimat is involved in an effort to reassert class politics into the racial debate. With

Ransby and a host of other African-American intellectuals and activists, he is an organizer of the Black Radical Congress, scheduled to take place in Chicago on June 19-21. The gathering explicitly rejects "racial and biological determinism, black patriarchy and black capitalism as solutions to problems facing black people," asserting that "capitalism is the root cause of the major forms of social misery, hunger and exploitation in the United States and the world." The group hopes to offer a public alternative to Farrakhan's nationalism and to add another voice to the country's racial discourse.

But despite their disagreements regarding the cause, Gates and Akalimat both recognize a serious challenge facing black political leaders. As the dynamic of income polarization becomes harder to reverse, there seems little doubt that class antagonisms within the black community will increase.

Back in Chicago, Alderman Madeline Haithcock, who represents both the Lake Meadows neighborhood and the Ida B. Wells projects, is finding it increasingly difficult to settle grievances between the two communities. In the upcoming election, Haithcock will be challenged by a resident who charges that she too frequently sides with her middle-class constituents against their poor neighbors. Pundits are predicting a heated campaign, and the flame is spreading. ■



BY JOEL BLEIFUSS

WAR DANCE *or charade?*

On November 2, 1990, at a Republican campaign event in Minnesota, President George Bush took a microphone and rallied his audience behind the Gulf War. The Commander in Chief exhorted the crowd, "We cannot compromise with brutal, naked aggression." Behind him, a line of cheerleaders bounced up and down shaking pompoms. No U.S. war had ever been so expertly choreographed. As *In These Times* went to press, another war with Iraq appeared imminent. It is time once again to ask: Is the United States addressing a real threat or are Americans being duped into another ill-advised military adventure?

The history of U.S. involvement in the Persian Gulf offers little comfort. Ever since the British Empire withered in the aftermath of World War II, the United States has increasingly tried to play power-broker in the region. Over the years, Washington has sided with numerous despotic regimes in order to ensure a steady supply of oil. In the '80s, Saddam Hussein became a key figure in that game-plan, as the United States, in an effort to counterbalance Iran, helped him build up a lethal arsenal of chemical and biological weapons. In the summer of 1990, that strategy backfired. Saddam invaded neighboring Kuwait, and it took a U.S.-led force of half a million soldiers from 21 nations to expel him.

Seven years later, another crisis has developed. U.N. inspectors believe that Iraq is still hoarding chemical and biological weapons, and may have stashed away 22 or 23 missiles of questionable readiness. If that is so, the Iraqi government is in violation of U.N. Resolution 687. A showdown with the U.N. Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) began last September, when Iraq blocked inspectors from entering suspected weapons facilities. All members of the U.N. Security Council agree that Iraq's failure to comply with the inspections is a serious transgression that must be addressed. But the council is divided about whether military force should be used to compel Iraq to comply.

The Clinton administration maintains that Iraq is a "rogue state," and must be stopped from developing weapons of mass

destruction. As the president said on February 17, "We have to defend our future from these predators of the 21st century." Many in the foreign policy establishment, though not so hyperbolic, agree. "This strategy is to persuade him to change his mind," says Gary Sick, a former National Security Council official who was Jimmy Carter's point-man on Iran. "But a threat is only as good as your willingness to go through with it. This is the fifth month of this episode."

Air strikes would most likely target Iraq's Republican Guard—Saddam's most elite and loyal troops—as well as intelligence and security services, and their communications transmitters. In the short run, this tactic could force Saddam to allow more inspections. In the long run, Washington hopes that the strikes might hamper his ability to control his internal security apparatus, enabling dissident officers in the military to more easily stage a coup. "I don't see it as an unrealistic strategy," says Sick.

Critics of the administration, however, think the president is too quick to reach for his guns. Some argue that the objectives of a strike are unachievable. Others fear that such a strike could have unfortunate, unintended consequences. Still others find the whole enterprise hypocritical and immoral.

Eugene Carroll is concerned about what might go wrong. A retired rear-admiral, Carroll now helps steer the Center for Defense Information, a think tank that criticizes excessive military spending. "If we bomb, what are our objectives?" he asks. If the United States wants to deny Saddam the ability to create and use weapons of mass destruction, air strikes are unlikely to complete the job—they may destroy some weapons stashes, but it would be impossible to verify the damage done. If, however, the objective is to force Saddam to make major concessions, or to run him from power altogether, air strikes are also suspect. "We hit him with 88,000 tons of bombs and missiles in 43 days of Desert Storm," says Carroll. "He didn't concede and he didn't lose control. And our much, much weaker effort this time is not going to change that."

And even if the air strikes do dislodge Saddam by provoking a coup, there is the question of succession. "Who takes his



place?" asks Carroll. "Can they maintain central authority in Iraq? Can they defend the territorial integrity of Iraq against its neighbors? Iran has designs on the south, Syria on the west, and Turkey, with its Kurdish problem, on the north. This is the frightening thing. [The Clinton administration] has failed to think through the consequences of what could, in effect, destroy the state of Iraq."

Sick acknowledges that the administration's strategy has risks. "There is going to be a high price to be paid if it happens and if it is less than successful," he says. "There will be a lot of collateral damage and innocent civilians killed and wounded. The Arab world is immensely concerned about the fate of the Iraqi people. And the Arab world is very upset right now about the United States and its willingness to use maximum force against an Arab state, at the same time that Israel is flouting all kinds of resolutions and the United States does nothing about it."

It would help, of course, if the United States held the moral high ground here. But Washington has a history of failing to abide by its own principles. The United States, using a controversial interpretation of U.N. Resolution 678, justifies taking unilateral action against Iraq in order to enforce U.N. Resolution 687. This latter resolution, in addition to ordering Iraq to destroy its weapons of mass destruction, sets as an objective a Middle East ban on all weapons of mass destruction, which would include Israel's nuclear arsenal. "Chemical and biological weapons are weapons of mass destruction that the poor countries develop when they can't afford nuclear weapons," says Phyllis Bennis, a fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies and author of *Calling the Shots: How Washington Dominates Today's U.N.* "As long as somebody else in the neighborhood has at least 200 high-density nuclear bombs, other countries are going to feel compelled to match them with weapons they can afford."

Rather than escalating hostilities with Iraq, the United States ought to be taking a step back. Consider the effects that seven-plus years of economic sanctions have had on the Iraqi people: According to a 1996 UNICEF report, 4,500 children die every month in Iraq from hunger and disease. Kathy Kelly



U.S. air strikes will not solve the current crisis.

of the peace group Voices in the Wilderness argues that the United States is itself waging biological warfare against Iraq by denying the country chlorine and spare parts for water treatment plants that would have prevented waterborne diseases.

Besides killing people, war and sanctions fuel Islamic fundamentalism and risk turning the United States into an enemy of the entire region. In oil-rich kingdoms, public opinion doesn't count for much, but should the Saudi crown be toppled or the Kuwaiti sheiks fall, American access to Gulf oil would be endangered. The sanctions against Iraq can be compared to the Treaty of Versailles, which punished Germany for its part in World War I and thereby sowed the seeds of fascism. "We are worried about weapons of mass destruction," says Sick. "But the Iraqi people could become a weapon of mass destruction if they are con-

vinced that the West and its Arab neighbors conspired against them. This is an extremely dangerous affair."

What else could be done? Bennis at IPS argues that there is a more constructive approach to the situation. She suggests three steps: Monitoring should continue, but the process should be clarified to outline a step-by-step procedure through which Iraq could achieve full compliance. The United Nations should consider signing off on the question of nuclear technology, and perhaps on missile technology, to show that there has, indeed, been progress. Finally, the United Nations should develop an international system to monitor not only Iraq but also the exporting countries—such as the United States, Britain, Germany and France—that supplied Saddam with these weapons in the past. Says Bennis, "If we are serious about stopping proliferation, we have to get serious about it not by demonization but by real international consensus."

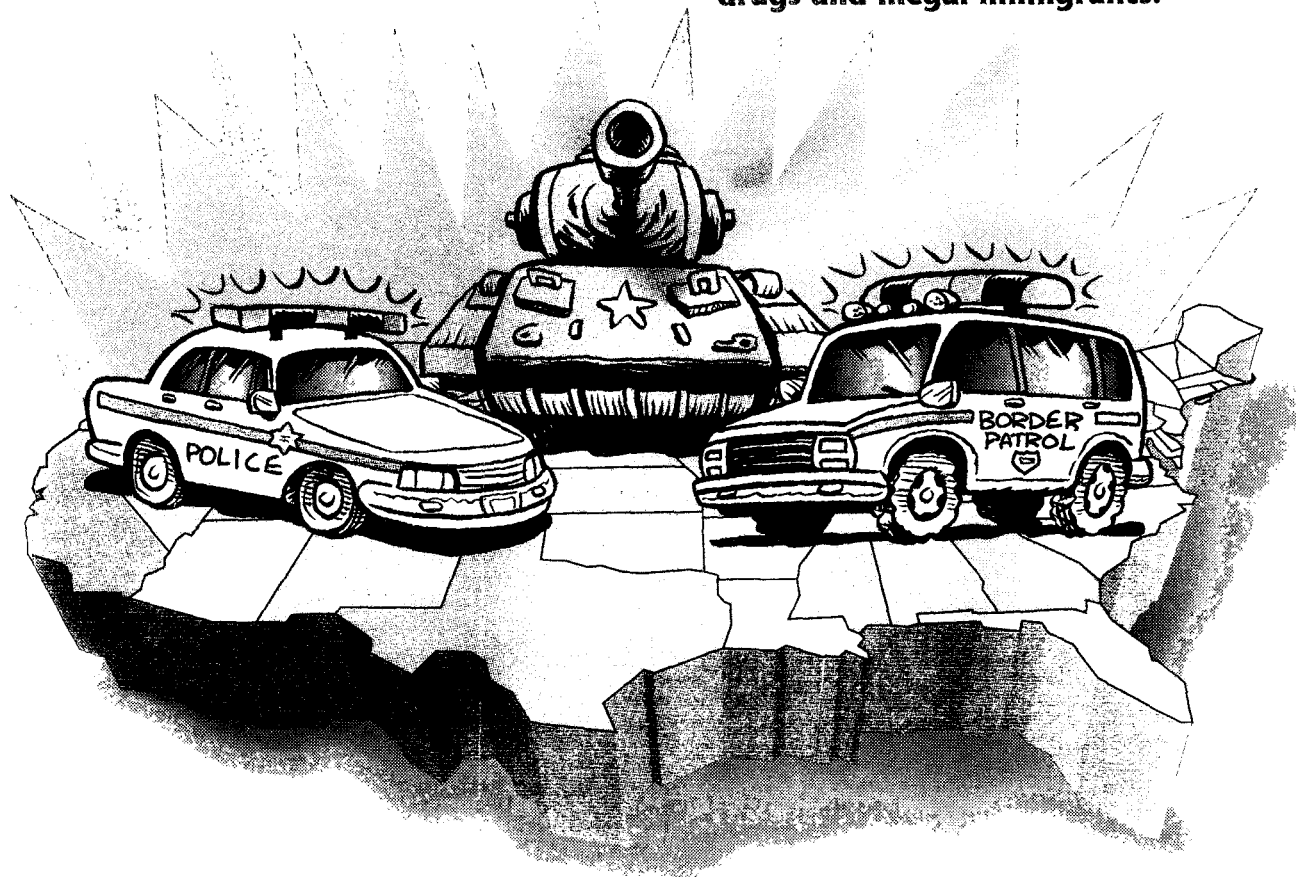
Admiral Carroll suggests that the United States fix a root cause of the problem and re-examine its \$268 billion a year investment in the military. "If your best tool is a hammer, you go around looking for nails to pound," he says. "We have made military force the main instrument of our foreign policy. It is the big hammer. And every so often we have to find a nail to pound, be it in Grenada, Libya, Panama or Iraq." ■

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Crossing Borders

By Christian Parenti

The police, military and Border Patrol have joined forces to crack down on drugs and illegal immigrants.



On July 27, 1997, life in Chandler, Ariz., was turned upside-down. Thirty police officers and six Border Patrol agents, in mixed teams, began a massive immigrant "round-up" in the city's Latino barrio. SWAT-style, house-to-house searches shattered the early morning calm. Families were roused from their beds with blinding flashlights and guns in their faces. People were hastily deported in their underwear. The combined force combed the streets, stopping cars at random. Even schoolchildren were detained and questioned.

"They really went too far, entering homes, detaining all the Mexican-looking kids," says Alberto Esparza, vice president of the newly formed Chandler Coalition for Civil and Human Rights. "They even beat a few people up. This one 17-year-old kid—who was a U.S. citizen—ran, and when they caught him, they beat him real bad."

The operation in this desert city of 130,000 people, 120 miles from the U.S.-Mexico border, lasted five days. All in all, authorities deported 432 undocumented migrants and—by mistake—two U.S. citizens.

Following the raid, 18 Latinos filed a \$35 million class-action lawsuit against the Chandler Police Department and

Border Patrol, alleging that both agencies violated the plaintiffs' Fourth Amendment rights against illegal arrests and searches.

The joint police-Border Patrol raid in Chandler is just one example of a growing trend of inter-agency collaboration, often involving the military, domestic police forces and immigration authorities. This joint enforcement, which began along the U.S.-Mexico border in the mid-'80s, was at first limited to fighting the drug war. Since then, its geographic scope and purpose have expanded.

Traditionally, the police, immigration authorities and the military have operated within strictly designated areas of the law that did not overlap. The Border Patrol's duty was to combat illegal immigration, the police were supposed to fight crime, and the military was charged with protecting the country from foreign enemies. As these sorts of distinctions have eroded over the past decade, each agency has accrued new powers—with dangerous implications for civil rights.

Beefed-up immigration enforcement is part of a larger and older trend of militarizing the U.S.-Mexico border. Today, there are 8,000 Border Patrol agents, a 110 percent jump from

1994. The Border Patrol's total yearly budget is now \$3 billion.

Urban sectors of the border now bristle with guard towers and impassable 18-foot-high, concrete "bollard fencing." Last year, the Border Patrol received 45 state-of-the-art Black Hawk helicopters to augment its fleet of more than 50 Vietnam-era Hueys. Agents use night-vision goggles, infrared TV cameras, hypersensitive microphones, high-tech motion sensors and mobile klieg floodlights in their hunt for illegal immigrants. In 1995, the Department of Defense estimated that \$260 million worth of military hardware sat on the border. Thousands of U.S. soldiers assist the Border Patrol, building roads, providing aerial reconnaissance and, in the case of the National Guard, searching vehicles.

The militarization of the border has led to increased human rights abuses, and the risk of injury and death has swelled as migrants take more perilous journeys across desert and mountainous routes. But less well-known, the border build-up has major implications for domestic law enforcement, in large part because the border is the window through which the military is entering the realm of domestic policing.

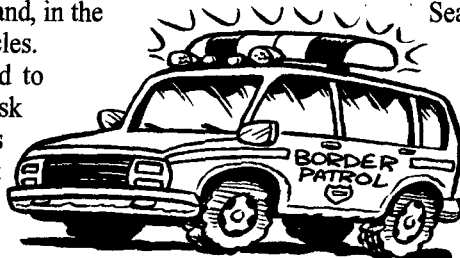
The Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 set up a fire wall between the U.S. military and civilian law enforcement. The military was banned from domestic law enforcement, except in cases of national emergency, because Posse Comitatus made it illegal for soldiers to be deputized or to arrest U.S. citizens. The law was a concession to white Southerners attempting to end Reconstruction, which, thanks to an occupying force of union troops, allowed blacks the right to vote and hold political office. Posse Comitatus ushered in Jim Crow justice and legal segregation, but it inadvertently enhanced other civil liberties by keeping the military out of domestic affairs.

The Trojan horse for creeping militarization has been the threat of drugs. Posse Comitatus was first breached in 1983 when, in the name of fighting narco-trafficking, the military started funneling night-vision goggles and other equipment to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in South Florida. By 1986, this arrangement was formally coordinated by a new consortium of federal, state and local law-enforcement agencies called Operation Alliance. Then in November 1989, the different branches of the military centralized their side of the burgeoning partnership by creating the Joint Task Force-Six (JTF-6). This new project coordinated training and the flow of material support from the military to local and state police as well as federal agencies.

At first, JTF-6's task was restricted to assisting the DEA in the fight against drugs on the U.S.-Mexico border. In 1990, the military brought the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and Border Patrol into the fold, arguing that immigration and drugs could not be separated from one another. The INS and Border Patrol were empowered under Titles 19 and 21 of the U.S. Code to enforce both drug and contraband laws—that is, to act as DEA or Customs agents. As one senior Customs official told a 1990 Senate hearing, this "enables those agencies to conduct warrantless border searches, which are valuable in the border communities and

inland areas vulnerable to air smuggling."

The alliance between the military and law enforcement has now taken root across the country. In 1989, the federal government declared the first specially designated High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), which incorporated all the counties within 150 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border. At first, Operation Alliance and JTF-6 were limited to this area. But as these HDTAs proliferated, so too did the military's involvement in law enforcement. Today, the nation is graced with 17 of these hot spots. They encompass most major metropolitan areas—such as New York-New Jersey, the San Francisco Bay area, greater Chicago, Los Angeles, San Diego, Seattle and South Florida—as well as the marijuana-growing wilds of the rural Northwest and Appalachia.



Police in these HDTAs can request military assistance in the use of night-vision scopes, canine teams, data analysis, aerial surveillance, "mission planning," marksmanship and the interrogation of prisoners. The military

also offers courses in "Close Quarter Battle" and "Advanced Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain," which train police officers in how to conduct shoot-outs and storm apartments.

Elite Border Patrol tactical teams were the first to receive such training in 1989. These teams travel in helicopters and specialize in delivering heavy fire-power and using SWAT-style tactics in times of crisis. According to Timothy Dunn's book, *Militarizing the U.S.-Mexico Border*, these teams were deployed in some Latino neighborhoods during the 1992 Los Angeles riots.

Police departments in Philadelphia, Seattle, Burlington, Vt., Niagara Falls, N.Y., Columbus, Ohio, Atlantic City, N.J., and Rochester, N.Y., among others, requested SWAT-style training from the military in 1995 and 1996. The JTF-6 has also built training complexes for elite cops in San Diego and Hillsboro, Fla., near Tampa.

In the last 18 months, militarized immigration enforcement—sometimes involving helicopters, dogs and heavily armed raiding parties—has been increasing throughout the U.S. interior, from the pumpkin fields of Washington state to the poultry-processing plants of the Midwest and the barrios of Southern California.

The Border Patrol is teaming up with local police for daily operations in the Southwest. "On the border, it's very common to see the Border Patrol and the local police department or sheriff riding together," explains El Paso's chief Border Patrol agent, Mike Connell. In El Paso, Tucson and the towns of California's Imperial Valley, Border Patrol agents regularly patrol in teams with local police. In San Diego, there is an INS substation in downtown police headquarters.

By working closely with the INS/Border Patrol, police gain new legal powers. For example, the Border Patrol's standards for stops and searches are much lower, and more overtly racist, than those used by the police. "Border Patrol agents have the right to ask anyone, anywhere, for proof of citizenship," explains Jess Rodriguez, public affairs officer for the INS in El Paso.

"Actually, they're supposed to have a 'reasonable suspicion,' such as a heavily laden car, traveling near the border, with a Latino driver who wouldn't make eye contact," explains San Diego federal public defender Jeremy Warren, in response to the INS officer's comment. Either way, the Border Patrol inevitably uses skin color and accent when deciding who to stop. This standard, which is problematic enough at the border, becomes a racist nightmare when applied within the U.S. interior.

Currently, there are 2,500 Border Patrol agents stationed in the San Diego area, with new agents arriving all the time. The abundant new personnel have allowed the INS to set up checkpoints all over California's southern counties. Between checkpoints, the Border Patrol cruises Latino communities, some as far as 100 miles from the border.

This collaboration is useful in other ways as well. When the Border Patrol or police make contact with a "subject," they can simply pass the person back and forth between their respective agencies. If the person has immigration papers, the local police can search for drugs or run a local warrant check—tasks that the INS is not allowed to do. The inverse is true as well. Latinos who run stop signs can be checked by the Border Patrol for immigration papers.

There is also a rapidly growing network of interlocking data banks that help track citizens and noncitizens alike. The INS and Border Patrol use a state-of-the-art computer system called IDENT, which links local, state and federal criminal data banks to immigration records. Fingerprints and photos collected at the border, during deportations, are now stored and used to police Latinos in the fields of California's Central Valley and the barrios of Los Angeles. Likewise, undocumented migrants busted at the border can be vetted for outstanding state and federal warrants.

The expanding legal powers of the police and federal agents in the border region have generated a new layer of terror and tension among Latino immigrants—and even Chicano citizens. "People aren't just scared of going north. Thanks to these

roadblocks boxing in San Diego County, they're scared to go anywhere, especially back south," says Roberto Martinez, director of the American Friends Service Committee's U.S.-Mexico Border Program. "We get calls all the time from the barrios that women are too scared to leave their homes."

Given the current climate, Latinos are particularly vulnerable to exploitation in the workplace. Last year, for example, the INS launched Operation Clean Sheets, raiding more than 100 large hotels to ferret out undocumented workers. Martinez and other civil rights activists have been working with unions to inform migrant laborers of their rights. "At one meeting, literally no one showed up," says Martinez. "People are very frightened right now."

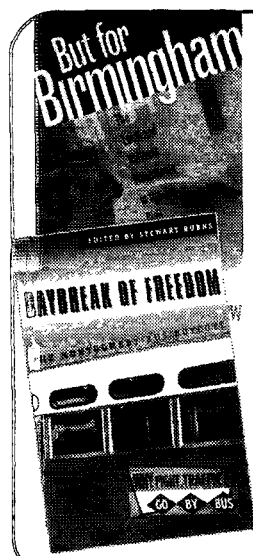
The Chandler raid still haunts the town's Latino residents a year and a half later. In response to the public outcry, the Arizona Attorney General's Office launched an investigation. Residents told investigators that their children were scared to go outside and that they had been "made to feel like cockroaches."

In September 1997, the Attorney General released a detailed and chilling report condemning the raid. Quoting police radio transcripts, the report revealed that police and Border Patrol agents openly ignored "probable cause" and "reasonable suspicion."

"American citizens were ridiculed and humiliated by Chandler Police officers," the report concluded. "The Chandler Police Department and INS/Border Patrol violated the Constitutional right of American citizens and legal residents to equal protection and to be free from unlawful searches and seizures."

Of course, most such raids go uninvestigated and uncriticized. ■

Christian Parenti teaches sociology at the New College of California, in San Francisco. He writes on criminal justice issues for numerous publications, including *The Nation*, *The Progressive* and *The Baffler*.

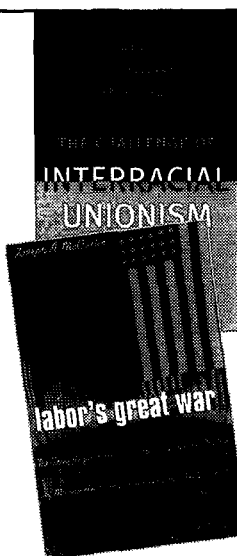


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AFTER FUSION:



The New New Party

By John Nichols

For most Americans, the New Party remains, at best, a blip on the electoral radar screen. But for the watchdogs of conservative orthodoxy at the *Wall Street Journal's* editorial page, it has emerged as a favorite whipping boy.

Bemoaning the growing influence of the New Party within the upper echelons of the AFL-CIO, the *Journal's* editorialists fretted last fall about how the New Party was responsible for a labor movement that was "drifting leftward" and worried openly about what impact the New Party's influence might have on the economic and social direction of the nation.

Readers who are familiar with the *Journal's* peculiar brand of editorial license know this to be high praise indeed. As Rep. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) puts it, "If the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page goes after you, you can pretty well bet you're doing the right thing."

And, in many senses, the New Party is doing the right thing. After six years, the party has built what is arguably the most sophisticated left-leaning political operation the country has seen since the decline of the Farmer-Labor, Progressive and Non-Partisan League groupings of the early part of the century.

The party is a model of multiracial politics, with people of color making up 40 percent of its national membership. Women and young people are not just window dressing but real players. And the party has succeeded in leaping regional boundaries, organizing successful chapters in the West, the South, the Northeast and the Upper Midwest.

With 11,000 dues-paying members, growing ties to organized labor and an expanding network of chapters, the New Party has scored close to 150 electoral victories in races for city council, school board, county board and state legislatures around the country. In 1996, it helped Chicago's Danny Davis, a New Party member, win a Democratic congressional primary, thereby assuring his election in the majority-black district. And, in 1998, with a "virtual party" strategy of working both inside and outside the Democratic fold, the New Party is moving closer to achieving its long-term goal of positioning itself as a left-leaning counterbalance to independent right-wing groups, especially the Christian Coalition.

That prospect may frighten the *Wall Street Journal*, but it has veteran populist campaigners like former Texas Agriculture Commissioner and radio personality Jim Hightower excited. "I'm more and more convinced that the New Party is doing it right," says Hightower, who has joined the party and hit the road to speak out on its behalf. "They started slow, started local. They made sure they knew how to do politics right. They started winning, and now they have a model that people can buy into."

The roots of the New Party go back to the aftermath of Jesse Jackson's run for president in 1988. At that time, Dan Cantor, who had served as labor coordinator for the Jackson campaign, and University of Wisconsin sociology professor Joel Rogers began talking about how to formulate an alternative to the increasingly indistinguishable Democratic-Republican monolith.

Rogers determined that, as the Democratic Leadership Council moved the party of Roosevelt rightward, an opening existed for a movement that recognized the economic realities of globalization, downsizing, wage stagnation and widening income disparity. From the start, Rogers insisted that this new party must eschew rigidity and cynicism for a pragmatic, values-based politics.

"We have to take the [conventional political axis] and rotate it," Rogers says. "We should make the fight not about liberalism and conservatism as they are conventionally defined. It should be a fight between those who want to impose some human values on the operation of this country and those who don't."

The "human values" Rogers talks about are summed up in a party platform that focuses on:

- economic reforms (full employment, a shorter work week, a guaranteed minimum income for all adults and a universal "social wage" that includes guarantees of health care, childcare, vacations and lifelong access to education and training).
- electoral reforms (full public financing of elections, universal voter registration, proportional representation and bal-

lot access).

- the democratization of banking and financial systems (greater public control and regulation of banking, development of community-controlled alternative financial institutions and worker control over the investment of pension assets).

- urban renewal as a cornerstone for creating a sustainable economy.

- a more progressive tax system.

- a bar on discrimination based on race, gender, age, country of origin and sexual orientation.

- reduction of military spending and an end to unilateral military interventions.

- trade policies that seek to improve living standards around the world, rather than promoting a race to the bottom that benefits only multinational corporations and their shareholders.

That's hardly an unfamiliar agenda to progressives. What differentiated the New Party in its early years from other progressive third parties was its pursuit of a legal strategy of restructuring election law to allow third parties to co-endorse candidates running on major tickets. This "fusion" strategy imagined a scenario in which candidates could combine the votes they received on both the Democratic and New Party ballot lines. Such a reform could circumvent the major pitfall of the winner-take-all electoral system: that third parties simply draw votes away from their closest competitor. With fusion, the New Party might provide the margin of victory instead.

The threat of losing New Party support, or of the New Party running its own candidates against conservative Democrats, would begin a process of forcing the political process to the left, Rogers argued. Ultimately, the theory went, the New Party might replace the Democrats, or perhaps American politics would evolve to feature three or even four major parties.

Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist recognized the logic of that argument better than most, declaring from the bench, "If we were to rule for you, it would result in quite sweeping changes in a great many states." Unluckily for the New Party strategists, Rehnquist was not inclined to allow such changes. Last year, he joined a conservative majority on the Court in voting 6-3 to protect what Justice David Souter, a dissenter, referred to as the "hegemony" of the Republican and Democratic parties.

In many areas around the country, the "post-fusion" New

Party has moved toward a greater willingness to do battle within the Democratic Party. In Wisconsin, for instance, Ed Garvey, a labor lawyer and New Party member, is all but certain to win the Democratic nomination for governor and New Party members are expected to win several legislative seats as Democrats.

Other New Party members, however, remain uncomfortable with strategies that push the party too close to the Democratic fold. For example, Montana New Party members are gearing up to try and win a separate ballot line in that state. "I really think we need to have an alternative to the Democratic Party in partisan races," says Secky Fascione, a Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union leader in Missoula. "I'm not opposed to working with Democrats in certain circumstances, but I think we have to maintain a degree of independence."

Some veteran progressive activists worry that the New Party's inside-outside strategy is doomed to failure. "I have a lot of respect for people in the New Party. But I still think it's dangerous when you talk about trying to pull the Democratic Party to the left," says Santa Fe City Council member Cris Moore, a Green Party member. "The problem is that groups tell themselves they are pulling the Democratic Party to the left when in reality the powerful forces that control the Democratic Party end up forcing sincere people to compromise in order to win victories that don't end up looking very much like victories."

New Party members reject the suggestion that their principles will disappear if the group gets pulled into the orbit of the Democratic Party. "The Christian Coalition has more power because it is not a wholly owned subsidiary of the Republican Party, and I think the same is going to be true for us," says the

New Party's Cantor. "The New Party is independent, it's issue-oriented, it's values-based. When we back candidates, whether they're Democrats or not, we'll back them on that basis."

The Supreme Court's rejection of fusion has had remarkably little impact at the party's grass roots, where most of its political campaigning continues to take place in nonpartisan races where fusion was never a factor. "Progressives have spent a lot of energy trying to influence federal elections that we just don't have the resources yet to impact," says Tom Israel, executive director of Maryland's Montgomery County Education Association and a New Party activist. "It's time that we started paying attention to politics in our own backyards—school boards, town councils, mayors."



New Party members march for a living wage in Chicago.

That attention has paid off in places like Madison, Wis., where the party's roots run deeper than anywhere else in the country. Since 1993, candidates endorsed by its county-wide chapter, Progressive Dane, have won 36 nonpartisan races for the school board, county board and city council.

Candidates endorsed by the party came close to winning control of the Missoula City Council last year, and New Party picks won key posts in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minn., Chicago, Long Island, N.Y., Montgomery County, Md., and Little Rock, Ark. In Little Rock, as in other cities, the New Party works with the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) and local unions. Last fall, this coalition spearheaded an campaign to block a \$14 million sales tax increase, which was earmarked to expand the County Jail.

"The New Party isn't afraid to raise issues that, for the most part, the Democrats have stopped talking about," says Harvard professor Cornel West, who has become an active supporter. "In a lot of places, it's the New Party that is saying, 'Look, building a thousand new jail cells isn't going to solve our problems, but fixing up a school or passing a living-wage ordinance just might.'"

That focus on issues has translated into a successful referendum strategy. The New Party played a lead role in passing campaign finance reform initiatives in Arkansas, Montana, Washington, D.C., and other jurisdictions, and it led the fight for living-wage initiatives in St. Paul and other cities. In Minneapolis, the party was instrumental in passing charter amendments last November that brought the police department under the jurisdiction of the city's civil rights ordinance and that upset a scheme by the city's corporate fathers to use public funds to subsidize a new stadium for the Minnesota Twins baseball team.

In both of the Minneapolis charter amendment campaigns, the New Party's Progressive Minnesota affiliate used volunteers to offset heavily financed foes and win overwhelmingly in both African-American and white working-class neighborhoods. In so doing, says executive director Cantor, Progressive Minnesota built "precisely the sort of coalition that we want the New Party to be."

The question is whether the party can build these coalitions in bigger cities. While the party has had some electoral success in Chicago, it continues to struggle in New York. It has yet to assert itself in any kind of meaningful way in other urban areas, such as Los Angeles, where its brand of multiracial populism ought to have significant appeal.

For union leaders who have cautiously been exploring new political vehicles, however, the New Party seems to have struck a chord. "I've consistently been impressed with what the New Party has been able to accomplish," says Andrew Stern, president of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and a key player in AFL-CIO political strategies. "They've been out there in front on issues like the living wage, pushing it into debate. We like to say that they work closely with labor but, in a lot of instances, they've actually been generating the ideas and showing unions that it's possible to accomplish a lot more than we thought."

A year ago, New Party officials huddled with the AFL-CIO

executive council, the first-ever official meeting between the union leadership and a third party. And recently, the SEIU donated \$10,000 to the New Party.

Yet, the party's prospects for success at the national level remain uncertain. The New Party has no plan for engaging in a systematic way in congressional elections in 1998—let alone presidential politics in 2000. Indeed, the party is not even active in a majority of states, and it has yet to weave its chapters into the sort of coherent whole that would provide a true counterbalance to the radical right.

There are no guarantees that the New Party will ever make the leap from being a clearinghouse for scattered chapters to national party status, as the Republicans of the 1850s did in just two years and the Socialists of the early 1900s did in less than 10.

Indeed, the barriers are real. Despite a growing level of support from some unions, the New Party's entire annual budget is smaller than those of individual congressional candidates in high-stakes races. In addition, the party has yet to forge coalitions with such natural allies as Vermont's independent progressives, San Francisco's left-wing office holders and political clubs, or the vibrant Rainbow Coalition chapters in places such as Louisville—let alone Green groupings that have become significant political players in New Mexico, Hawaii and Maine.

Party leaders acknowledge that they must build the base of chapters substantially, solidify their relationship with organized labor and accumulate the resources needed to play politics in big cities, big states and a big country. Quietly, they also acknowledge that they must define the precise nature of their party's relationship with labor, groups such as ACORN and, above all, progressive Democrats.

Cantor understands the challenge. To meet it, he looks back to a model from the first years of the 20th century. The wave of independent political activity in the '30s—which pushed not only the Democratic and Republican parties to the left but saw some third parties develop across the country—had strong roots in the Non-Partisan League, a coalition of farmers and trade unionists that sprang from the rural counties of North Dakota, forged grass-roots victories and eventually became a force with which even the president had to reckon. The Non-Partisan League eschewed formal affiliation with any party and instead endorsed progressive candidates running as Democrats, Republicans and independents. Most of those candidates won.

"I look at the Non-Partisan League model and I think, that's what progressives need to be looking at today," says Cantor. "We need a party that breaks the barriers of conventional politics, that is serious about fighting for the long term and about building something that, ultimately, will win the big elections—either on its own or by changing the political dynamic so that progressive ideas and progressive candidates are no longer marginalized." ■

John Nichols is an editorial writer for The Capital Times in Madison, Wis. He covers national politics for The Progressive and writes frequently for The Nation.

Monsieur... Can You Spare a Dime ?



THE UNEMPLOYED IN FRANCE BECOME A POLITICAL FORCE

By Marie A. Combesque

Despite their swelling numbers, the unemployed in France have been quiescent until recently. In the fall of last year, unemployed people figured prominently on French movie screens, with the British box-office success, *The Full Monty*, and its French rival, *Marius et Jeannette*. Then, on December 11, the unemployed burst onto the political stage, occupying the state unemployment agency in the southern city of Marseilles. This action precipitated a spate of similar occupations in other cities large and small, including Arras, Grenoble, Bordeaux and Metz.

The movement has struck a chord in a society that had succumbed to collective resignation since a long-term economic crisis set in during the mid-'70s. According to a recent poll published in the Paris daily *Le Monde*, the protesters have the support of 70 percent of the French population. "Those who occupied the unemployment agencies refuse to lose hope in the future," commented a recent favorable editorial in *Le Monde*. The unemployed people who stormed the state unemployment agencies were applauded by those waiting in line to see social workers. The flocks of reporters and television cameras that covered the sit-ins gave the protesters positive media exposure.

Currently, when French citizens lose their jobs, they receive checks from Unedic, the French unemployment insurance program. These payments, which start at 57 percent of the worker's last salary, gradually decrease over time and expire after a year. At that point, people over age 25 become entitled to a minimum monthly income of 3,644 francs (about \$600) for a couple (plus about \$120 per child) or 2,429 francs (about \$400) for a single adult. Adults between the ages of 18 and 25 are not eligible.

The movement for the unemployed used the protests to demand an immediate "Christmas bonus" of 3,000 francs (about \$500). More broadly, they are pushing for a radical change in Unedic's policies. The protesters want insurance benefit levels to remain steady throughout the first year of unemployment and are calling for a 50 percent increase in the

minimum income for long-term unemployed people. The movement is also asking for free mass transport for the unemployed throughout the Paris region.

The movement for the unemployed is not as large as it may appear at first glance. At the movement's peak in early January, only 20 of the nation's more than 600 unemployment bureaus had been occupied. The movement gained visibility by also targeting places of symbolic importance. For instance, militants occupied the pyramids of the Louvre museum and the Ecole Normale Supérieure, the elite school of literature and philosophy, to call attention to how the unemployed are cut off from culture and higher education. They also occupied the local agencies of EDF-GDF, the nationalized electric and gas company, which is renowned for cutting off utilities, after only a few warnings, for those who can no longer pay.

Large street demonstrations attracted further attention to the movement. On January 7, 15,000 people marched through the streets of Paris, and 5,000 came out ten days later. In both demonstrations, unemployed people pushed empty shopping carts to dramatize their exclusion from consumer society.

Caught off-guard and uncertain how to handle a movement whose concerns are central to its domestic policy agenda, the Socialist government headed by Prime Minister Lionel Jospin did not know how to react. After some initial hesitation, the government ordered the police to expel the protesters in all cases. Since the movement had the public's support, the police were careful not to use excessive force in removing them.

More generally, the Socialist government, which came to power following a snap election in June 1997, has taken a long time to move on the issue of poverty and unemployment. When the National Assembly was dissolved in April, the then-governing, right-wing coalition had to suspend debate on a bill to help the poor. Minister of Employment and Solidarity Martine Aubry has promised to introduce a new bill to fight social exclusion. But the government has not consulted



AFP PHOTO/PASCAL GUYOT

At a January 7 demonstration in Paris, the unemployed push empty shopping carts to dramatize their exclusion from consumer society.

associations of the unemployed, which it considers too politically marginal.

Since becoming prime minister in June, Jospin has concentrated on fulfilling his campaign promises to create 700,000 jobs for young people, half of them civil service posts, and to institute a 35-hour work week, which would presumably create some new jobs. The government is now paying a high price for focusing on such long-term projects while failing to adopt short-term, emergency measures to meet the pressing needs of the unemployed.

Jospin waited until December 26—more than two weeks after the protests began—to grant a slight increase in the money paid to unemployed people between the ages of 50 and 60. This decision only further riled the movement, which was quick to calculate that the proposed increase amounted to no more than 2 francs (about 35 cents) a day.

The government said it would not raise the minimum income because that would bring the income of the long-term unemployed too close to what someone making the minimum wage earns. This, the government argued, would serve as a disincentive for people to find jobs. In a prime-time television interview in January, Jospin declared that he was for “a society of work, not of assistance.”

The government’s ability to respond to the demands of the unemployed is also restricted by its commitment to the Maastricht treaty, which prohibits member states of the European Union from incurring a budget deficit of more than 3 percent of the GNP. These terms, which screen the countries eligible

for the common European currency in 1999, take primacy over any social policy aimed at reducing inequalities through more spending.

In the meantime, inequalities are growing. The official unemployment rate in France is currently 12.4 percent, up from 8.9 percent in 1990 and 11.6 percent in 1995.

A study published last November by the national institute of statistics, INSEE, revealed that nearly 7 million French citizens have precarious positions in the job market. For the first time, the study identified 2.8 million workers who earn less than 5,000 francs (about \$833) a month as members of the “working poor,” a term long used in the United States. Another 1.2 million have part-time or irregular work. Of the three million unemployed, over a third are classified as “long-term” (more than a year) or “very long-term” (more than two years). Two age groups are represented disproportionately among unemployed workers: those under 25 and those over 55.

For years now, charities have been sounding the alarm about the growing number of families in distress. They say that they cannot afford to provide the emergency aid that government social service agencies no longer give. In France today, nearly every working-class or middle-class family has at least one member who is unemployed or threatened with unemployment. When this is added to the impoverishment of large numbers of the unemployed, it is easier to understand the popularity of the nascent social movements.

In late 1995, massive public-sector strikes brought more

than 3 million people into the streets, more than during the general strike of 1968. At the time, polls revealed that 54 percent of the population sympathized with the goals of the strikers despite a vigorous attempt by the government to discredit their demands. The population also sympathized with workers during two major truckers' strikes in 1995 and 1997, and during recent occupations of manufacturing plants that were slated to close.

Private-sector workers are under pressure from their employers not to strike, because of the scarcity of stable jobs. In a sense, they have delegated their strike power to their public-sector colleagues, who are less easily dismissed. The unemployed, of course, are not subject to this pressure.

The movement of the unemployed has also highlighted the growing divisions between the mainstream trade unions and the new, more radical ones. Nicole Notat, general secretary of the French Democratic Labor Confederation (CFDT), currently presides over Unedic. Her organization has been hostile to the unemployed's associations since, in her view, the unemployed should be represented by traditional trade unions, not their own organizations.

New labor organizations that have recently split off from the mainstream unions, however, actively support the unemployed. These include "Solidarity, Unity, Democracy," which is very active among postal and telecommunications workers; the United Labor Federation, now a dominant force among teachers; and "All Together," the organized opposition to Notat's leadership within the CFDT that represents up to one-third of the union's members. These more militant unions argue that an effective struggle against unemployment should include an immediate reduction of the work week from 39 hours to 35 or, in some cases, even 32. They insist that this measure should apply to all categories of workplace—advice that the current government is not likely to follow.

The movement of the unemployed has also provoked disputes among and within the political parties of the governing majority. The Communist Party, for instance, is clearly torn. The Communist-affiliated General Confederation of Labor (CGT) is directly involved in the day-to-day operations of the movement, and the Communist daily paper *L'Humanité* has devoted full-page spreads to the movement's exploits. At the same time, however, the three Communist ministers in the Jospin government have been very cautious about pressing the demands of the unemployed.

In the past 15 years, the racist far right has successfully drawn in many of the most frustrated people in French society and now controls fully 15 percent of the electorate. Ironically, it has had little to say about the unemployed movement, just as it kept silent during the public-sector strike of 1995. "He who sows misery reaps rage" goes one of the slogans heard in the marches of the unemployed. The current movement has shown that Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front has no monopoly on that anger. ■

Marie A. Combesque is a freelance journalist and writer living near Paris. She writes on political topics concerning France and the United States. Translated from French by James Cohen.

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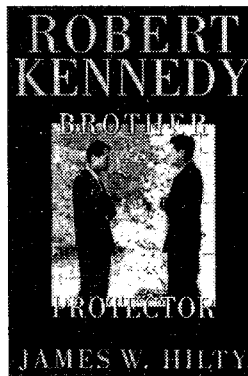
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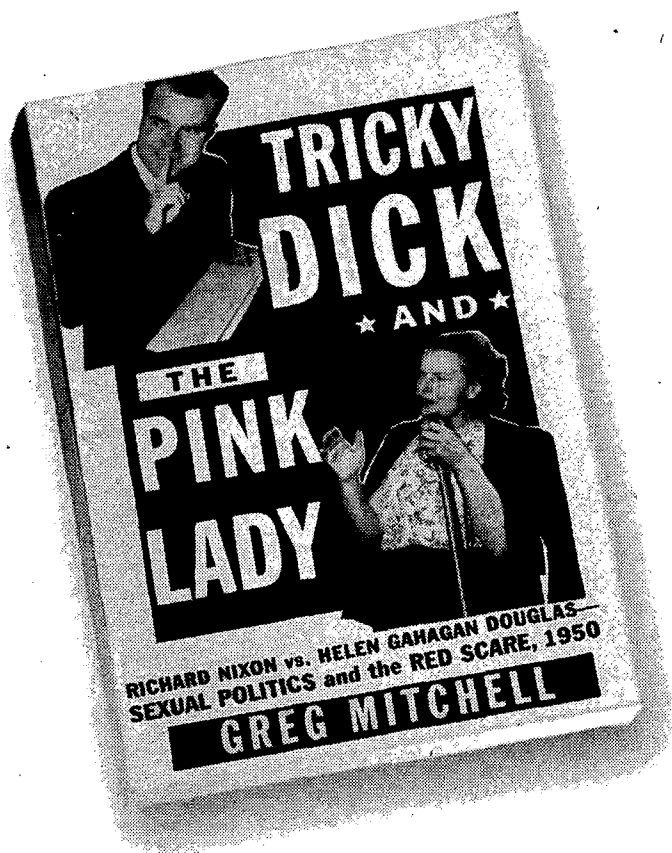
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Pretty and Pink

**Tricky Dick and the Pink Lady:
Richard Nixon vs. Helen Gahagan Douglas—
Sexual Politics and the Red Scare, 1950**

By Greg Mitchell
Random House
316 pages, \$25

REVIEWED BY
WILSON CAREY McWILLIAMS



For those of us who came to politics in the '50s, attitudes toward McCarthyism are apt to be as decisive a moral litmus test as Vietnam became one generation later. As Greg Mitchell observes in *Tricky Dick and the Pink Lady*, the 1950 California senatorial race in which Richard Nixon defeated Helen Gahagan Douglas towers in memory and story. As it should.

It was the most dramatic in a series of events that persuaded politicians that competitive anti-communism was crucial to electoral good fortune, beginning the era of high Cold War politics. Nixon's innuendo labeled Douglas as at least "soft on communism"; notoriously, his campaign's "Pink Sheet" linked Douglas' House votes to those of Vito Marcantonio, the American Labor Party congressman from New York, and hence, supposedly, to the Communist "line." His success, along with his role in the Alger Hiss case, established Nixon's national reputation as a formidable campaigner, a Machiavelli for the suburban age.

It's a story that bears retelling, and Mitchell, the author of a fine book on

Upton Sinclair's 1934 campaign for governor, knows the byways of California politics. Here and there, he stumbles over details, and his sympathy for revisionist views of the Cold War is sometimes obtrusive. On the whole, though, his history is shrewd and remarkably thorough. There aren't any startling revelations, despite some occasional puffery on the part of Mitchell. Nixon's story is pretty familiar. Still, Mitchell does introduce his readers to a three-dimensional Helen Douglas, now almost forgotten except as Nixon's opponent. His account is an admirable invocation of the election and its time, anti-Red nuttiness and all.

By our standards, the campaign's technology was primitive. Douglas did fly in a helicopter, but Nixon crisscrossed the state in a station wagon. Money was important, but the amounts involved were trifling, even adjusting for inflation. Billboards were at least as important as TV, then in its infancy. Professional consultants were already a feature of California electioneering, but polling was rudimentary. Most observers sensed that Nixon would win, but

few guessed the eventual margin—59 percent to 40 percent. In late October, my father, Carey McWilliams, writing in *The Nation*, wishfully predicted a Douglas victory.

The California public was disorganized, fragmented and dependent on the media. That still meant newspapers—no "liberal media" in those days. The state's great Republican triumvirate—the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Oakland Tribune*—joined by the Hearst papers, were stridently for Nixon; the McClatchy chain was neutral, and Douglas got grudging support from the *Los Angeles News*. But even the most biased reporters and pundits—the *Los Angeles Times*' egregious Kyle Palmer, for example—had to rely on words, not pictures, and diatribes had to be framed as arguments, subject to a second look. By the standard of our sound-bitten age, the 1950 contest, ugly enough, involved substantive debate.

In fact, Douglas might have done better in a TV campaign. A former actress, she was attractive and effective and

would have played wonderfully on the tube. She was ahead of her time in another sense: Like Hillary Clinton, Douglas used her maiden name until she entered politics, and she vowed she would “never” be a housewife (though she was a wife and mother who, abandoning Broadway, had followed her husband to Hollywood). But her gender hurt her. While Douglas attracted considerable support from women, there was little if any gender gap in actual voting. The theme of post-war society was to reintegrate men by returning women to domesticity, restoring “normalcy” to the relation of the sexes. Douglas’ candidacy bucked the tide.

As a candidate she had other flaws that would be liabilities even today. For one thing, her speeches were too long. And fundamentally an idealist of the old school, Douglas was inclined to see politics as moral drama. Her sense of righteousness bordered on arrogance, and it certainly limited her ability to cut a deal or build a coalition. In 1950, for example, President Harry Truman nominated a prominent Catholic layman from California to the federal bench without consulting Douglas, but suggested that she call Archbishop Francis McIntyre and take credit. But Douglas told her advisers that she “certainly” would not lie about the nomination and, apparently, she never made the call. Maybe it wouldn’t have mattered, but Catholic Democrats were a shaky constituency, and during the campaign, McIntyre—implicitly supporting Nixon—joined in the anti-communist homilies. To her credit, Douglas loved the crowd but was never willing to be its mirror.

Whatever Douglas’ defects as a campaigner, moreover, much of the fault was not in herself but in her stars. It was the first Cold War election: Unlike 1948, the terms of debate were framed, almost exclusively, by anxieties about foreign policy and American vulnerability, a pattern that persisted, more or less, until the collapse of the U.S.S.R. In 1949, the Soviets exploded an atomic bomb; 1950 was the year of “atom spies,” with the Rosenberg case breaking in June. The pursuit of subversives became modish—Douglas didn’t help her campaign by being one of a handful

to vote against the McCarran Internal Security Act—and the overwrought mood wasn’t helped when hostilities began in Korea. Events pushed public debate into areas—internal security and foreign policy—in which Nixon was comparatively strong and away from the domestic issues that were Douglas’ strong suit.

To a great extent, the campaign was over before it started. Nixon was virtually unopposed in the G.O.P. primary, while Douglas was locked in a bitter contest. Democratic factionalism, especially in a state with notoriously weak parties, was a Republican recipe for success. It was her Democratic primary opponent, Manchester Boddy, who first called Douglas the “Pink Lady” and who linked her to Marcantonio. Douglas won handily, but the primary identified her with the left while at the same time allowing Nixon to claim the center.

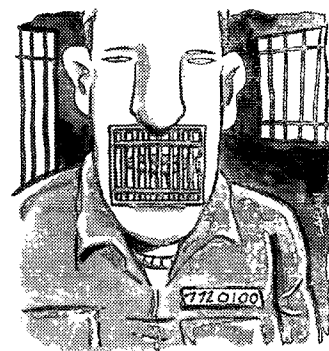
And among Democrats—even liberals—Douglas was on the left; its dirty innuendos aside, the “Pink Sheet” had an element of truth. Of course, she was an anti-communist: Douglas supported the Marshall Plan and the Korean War, and in 1948—to the dismay of many of her friends—she backed Truman instead of Henry Wallace. But she had wept when Wallace was denied the vice-presidential nomination in 1944, and she was close to people—Eleanor Roosevelt and, locally, Paul Taylor and my father—who defined the left edge of the liberal spectrum. By the standards of that time,

Douglas was militantly in favor of racial equality and she opposed the House Un-American Activities Committee. Most important, though, she was fearful about the arms race, unhappy with American aid to right-wing dictatorships and generally disinclined to see the Cold War in Manichean terms. Her convictions went over well in her district, but they were a hard sell in the state at large, particularly in 1950.

It didn’t help Douglas that James Roosevelt, the Democratic gubernatorial nominee, was opposed by the overwhelming Earl Warren, especially because it encouraged Truman—who couldn’t stand Roosevelt—to keep his distance from the campaign, giving Douglas only a back-handed kind of endorsement. In retrospect, however, two other endorsements cast an even longer shadow. Massachusetts Sen. John F. Kennedy, then an anti-communist crusader and suspicious of labor, contributed to and supported Nixon’s campaign. (In 1960, he expressed his regret to a skeptical Douglas.) By contrast, Texas Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson gave Douglas strong support and helped persuade House Speaker Sam Rayburn to praise her “splendid Americanism.” That myth-shaking reminder is an indication of Mitchell’s ability to help present-day Americans learn from politics past. ■

Wilson Carey McWilliams teaches political science at Rutgers University.

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The Factory of Facts

By Luc Sante

Pantheon, 306 pages, \$24

REVIEWED BY JEFFERSON DECKER

Luc Sante was born in 1954 in Verviers, Belgium, a fact that he repeats for effect nine times in the opening chapter of his memoir, *The Factory of Facts*. As a young boy, he emigrated to the United States with his parents. In this book, Sante, now a New York writer, meditates on his personal and family histories, trying to piece together his relationship with the city and the country of his birth.

Sante calls himself an "archeological detective" into his own past, accumulating reams of data about the peculiar little details—popular children's stories, national histories, television characters—that eventually helped to shape his consciousness. "The damndest bits of fugitive trivia may show up years later, recombined and inexplicable, prominent in the baggage of the adult self," he writes.

Much of this fugitive trivia is fascinating to discover. Sante's writing is sharp, sometimes to the point of being abrupt ("Belgium is an accident."), but it makes ordinarily drab stories come alive. The reader tours Verviers, an industrial city of "stubborn and even perverse independence," from its preindustrial origins through the riots that convulsed it during the first part of this century. One tastes the "Scotch cut with Apricot schnapps" on which his godfather "had merrily gotten me drunk" and hears Sante's *Tante Armande's* "sweetly chirping, high pitched 'Hein?'"

Sante concludes that, for all of us, "the past is there, always ready to welcome you, just an ocean away." His own voyage was well worth taking. ■

Whores and Other Feminists

Edited by Jill Nagle

Routledge, 290 pages, \$18.99

REVIEWED BY PAT ARNOW

Annie Sprinkle is an outrageous performance artist, and formerly a porn star, a stripper and a prostitute. Nina Hartley is an adult film actress (one of the few authentic porn stars who appeared in the recent movie *Boogie Nights*) and a feminist writer. Carol Leigh (a.k.a. "Scarlot Harlot") is a prostitute who claims to have invented the term "sex work." They are joined by peep-show dancers, massage-parlor masseuses, strippers, pornographers and prostitutes as essayists in Jill Nagle's collection, *Whores and Other Feminists*.

Lesbian, bisexual or straight, some of these writers enjoy their jobs, while others simply see the work as a way to make good money—more lucrative, less boring, and no more soul-deadening than secretarial work. They all believe that they and most other sex workers are *not* victims. "Our issues are *all* women's issues," writes one contributor, who is a prostitute, writer and former police officer.

Essays range from personal odysseys and advice for burned-out sex workers to footnoted scholarship (for example, "The Littlest Harlot," an investigation into the origins of the Barbie doll). There is also a round-table discussion with sex workers of color and "500 Words on Acculturation," in which former stripper Jessica Patton compares the sex she had at Smith College to sex she experienced in a live sex show. The sex show was better, she writes.

This book provides a welcome change from the more familiar puritanical version of feminism. ■

The Way The Wind Blew:

A History of the Weather Underground

By Ron Jacobs

Verso, 216 pages, \$15

REVIEWED BY RALPH SELIGER

Although a skimpy history of youthful radicalism from the late '60s through the early '80s, this book captures the ferocity of those times: the "Days of Rage" in Chicago in October 1969, the National Mobilization to End the War the following month, the May 1970 killings of student demonstrators at Kent State and Jackson State universities, police shoot-outs with the Black Panthers, prison breaks, massive demonstrations, bomb attacks and political manifestos. The author's complete identification with the ideological premises of his subjects itself illustrates the tenor of those years. It does not, however, allow for a well-conceived analysis.

In the hyper-militant environment of the New Left at that time—brought about by the seemingly endless war in Indochina and other Nixon-era outrages—the worst adaptations of "revolutionary" or Marxist theory and practice gained widespread appeal. Concerns about non-democratic manifestations of the left were easily dismissed as "liberal," "social democratic" or "revisionist" by the radicals. The author documents but neither notes nor laments that the New Left, which had emerged in the early '60s as a fresh direction inspired by the Civil Rights movement, buried itself in Old Left sectarianism. ■

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Continued from page 30

cultural activity. The NEA has been all but wiped out, its budget cut back to its 1977 level in real dollars. Funding has dropped from a high of \$179.9 million in 1992 to about \$98 million today. The agency's support to state arts councils has been reduced proportionately, and its power to leverage foundation money has decreased dramatically.

I was among the foot soldiers who fought the culture wars, naively expecting to martial an army of public supporters. But as we charged Capitol Hill, we found that the public was apathetic, even hostile. We thought free speech was an issue of vital importance to all citizens. But when we took to the streets, nobody was behind us. Our demand for freedom of expression under government funding was taken for elite arrogance. We needed a public groundswell, but we were out of touch with the voting public.

I have talked to colleagues around the country about the fiscal health of their organizations, and many are in critical condition. These small theaters, galleries and companies were barely making it before the funding cuts. Now they are downsizing, revising their long-range plans and, in some cases, avoiding controversial programming so as not to alienate their audiences. Turning to foundations and individuals for support, they must compete with suffering social-service agencies. It's a hard sell.

Many artists resent funders who seem willing to support only projects with social goals. Grant application guidelines that once demanded "innovative" proposals now give preference to "community-based" projects. This leads to "mission creep"—the temptation to launch new projects to satisfy these funding trends.

While some were bitter about the funding cutbacks, few wanted to admit defeat. Even when they are on the brink of folding, arts organizations tend to talk tough. Experience has taught them that revealing a chink in the fiscal armor leads to a fall-off in donations. While most insist they're OK, there's already a growing list of casualties. The most recent is the widely respected Randolph Street Gallery in Chicago, which was an exciting arts space for many years.

A personally devastating casualty is *High Performance*. For 20 years, the magazine was supported by subscribers, a little advertising and grants from the NEA, various states, counties or cities, and local and national foundations. Though grants never made up the majority of the budget, *High Performance* could not survive without them. This summer, after being rejected by every funder we applied to, we had to fold. Too many candidates applied for the meager supply of funds.

We are not alone. I recently attended a

gathering of 20 artists who run organizations around the country. It was difficult to focus the attention of these seasoned veterans because they were all preoccupied with money. One artist laid himself off as director of his California organization and canceled its groundbreaking training seminar. A theater director from Tennessee was disbanding his 20-year-old company due to a lack of funding. A visual artist from Texas kept bursting into tears, grieving over the cutoff of crucial city funding to her Latino organization because of criticism of homosexual themes. All were suffering from severe burnout. At the gathering, my partner and I announced the death of *High Performance*, a magazine that kept these artists and their communities in touch with each other.

This meeting left me with an immense sadness. I now have the same nostalgia for the golden age of the NEA that we all had in art school for Roosevelt's legendary WPA of the '30s, a time when artists and writers in every state were paid a living wage to stimulate and enrich their culture. Maybe the next generation will learn from our accomplishments and the mistakes we made. Perhaps our example will lead artists to establish closer and more fruitful alliances with their communities, making art so essential that threats to its nurture will not be tolerated. ■

Linda Frye Burnham is editor (with Steven Durland) of *The Citizen Artist*, an anthology from *High Performance* forthcoming from Critical Press. She also founded the 18th Street Arts Complex and Highways Performance Space in California and Art in the Public Interest in North Carolina.

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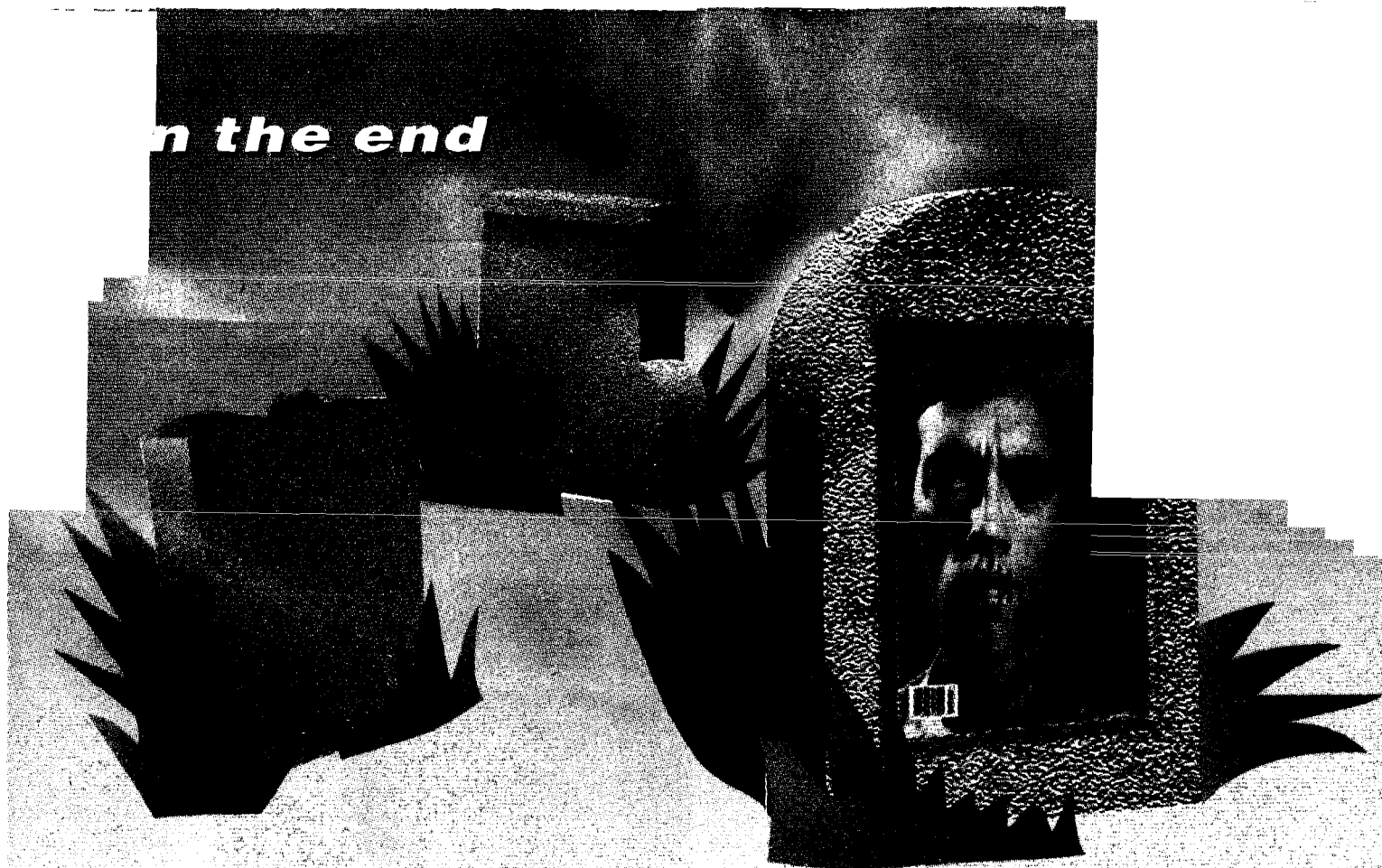
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Elegy for a Golden Age

By Linda Frye Burnham

The dust is settling on the golden age of public support for the arts in America. You laugh. Some golden age. The piddling amount the government allotted to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) never exceeded spending on military bands and didn't come close to the arts budgets of some European cities. But, limited as it was, the NEA helped free art from the stifling constraints of the marketplace, allowing it to proliferate across this country like never before.

The NEA challenged artists to experiment with abandon, exercise unbridled self-expression and create a new avant-garde. Since the NEA was founded in 1966, the number of dance companies jumped from 27 to 250, orchestras quadrupled to more than 200, nonprofit theaters increased from 56 to over 400, and public art agencies in small towns and cities grew to more than 3,000. An enormous spark of energy was supplied in the late '70s by a growing NEA and the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), a federal jobs-training program that quickly became a tool for the employment of artists and the foundation of an array of adventurous artist-run organizations.

I founded the magazine *High Performance* in this heady, fertile climate. The magazine followed the cutting edge of the arts across the country and around the world. In 1979, I visited dozens of young arts organizations in the rush of self-creation: Franklin Furnace in New York, Hallwalls in Buffalo, Nexus in Atlanta, Washington Project for the Arts in D.C., the Center for Contemporary Arts in New Orleans and Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions in my home town. These "alternative" organizations—whose staff and board members were working artists—took culture in their hands, made their own rules and challenged the mainstream art world. That era is ending.

The sound you hear in the distance is funding programs crashing, arts organizations imploding and a national infrastructure crumbling. What's left is the wreckage of the infamous "culture wars" waged by Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), the Rev. Donald Wildmon and their cohort on the right. Whether their motive was the suppression of "obscene" and "blasphemous" expression or the sacrifice of the arts to a political power-grab, they seriously crippled national support for

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